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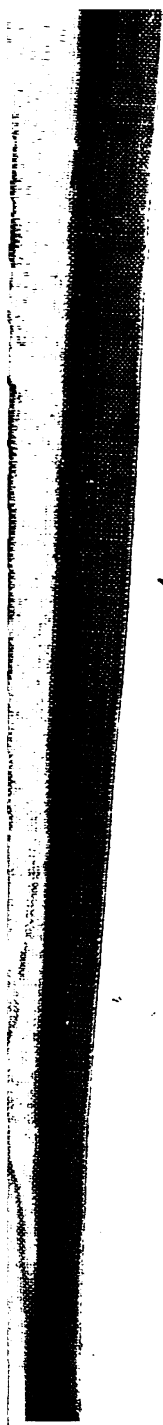
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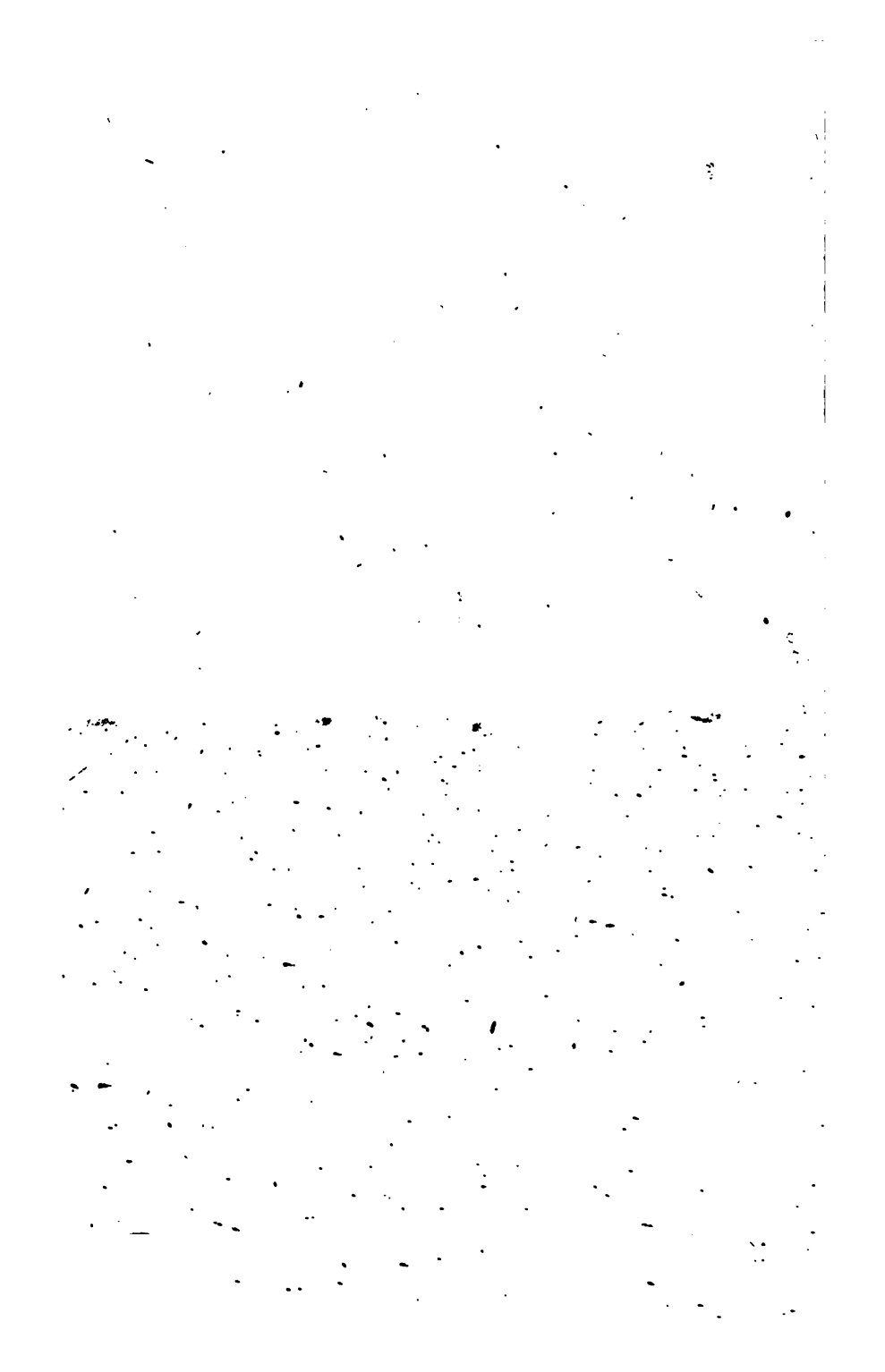
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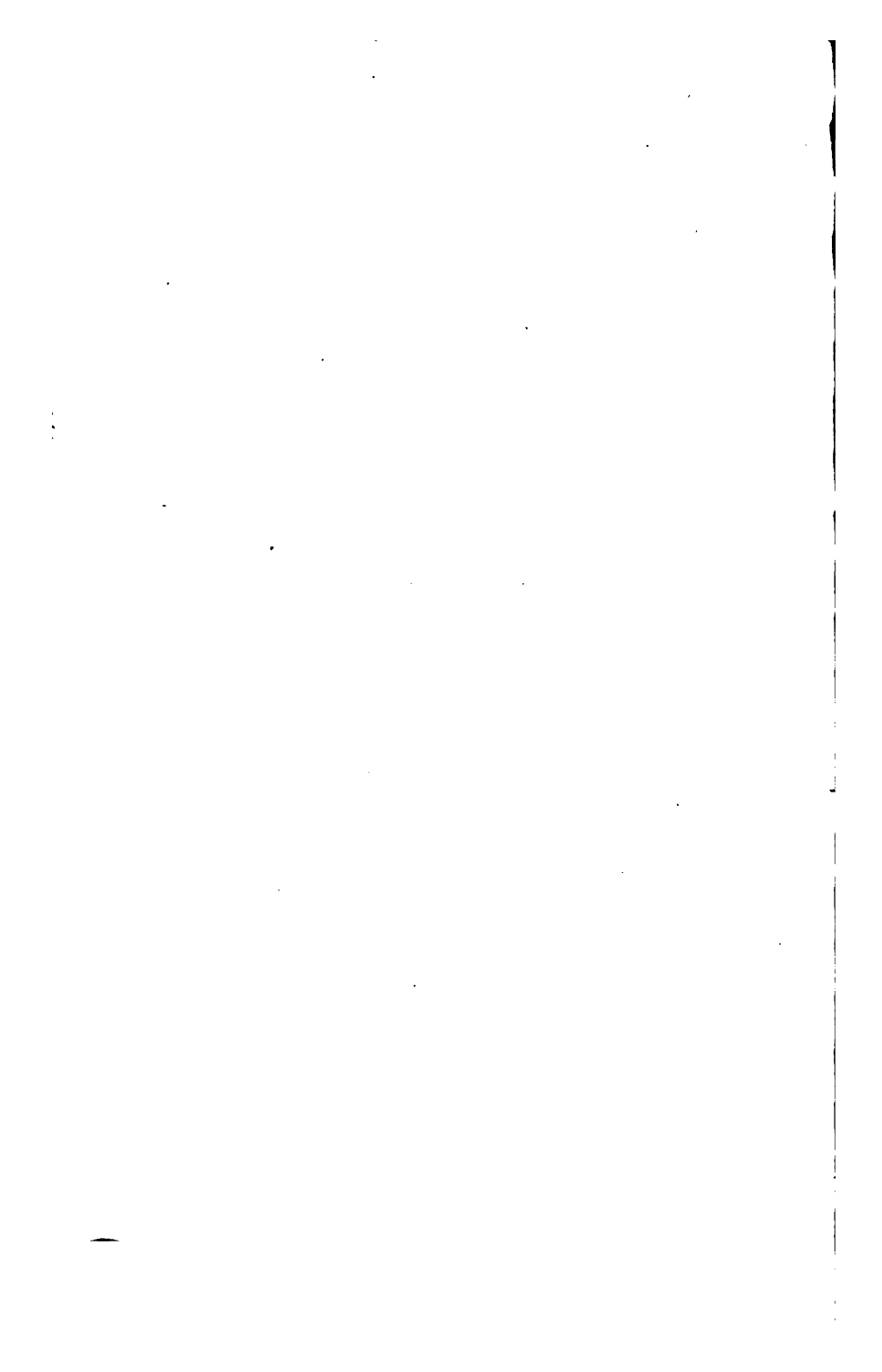
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**LIGHT AND DARKNESS.**

—  
**VOL. II.**



**LIGHT AND DARKNESS;**

**OR,**

**MYSTERIES OF LIFE.**

**BY**

**MRS. CATHERINE CROWE,**

**AUTHOR OF**

**"THE NIGHTSIDE OF NATURE," "SUSAN HOFLEY," &c.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

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# THE BRIDE'S JOURNEY.

(CONTINUED.)

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## CHAPTER II.

DURING the progress of the conversation already described, Karl made no observation whatever. He listened in silence; not without attention, but without objection, even although, in the different plans that were proposed, he heard himself always designated as the active agent in the murder. When the council broke up, the parties retired to bed—their present station being too near Dresden for their purpose.

VOL. II.

B

Next day, they resumed their journey ; and as their way lay through a gloomy forest, nothing but the presence of the postilion saved the young bride's life. The night was passed at a post-house, where there were so few rooms, that Adelaide had to sleep in the same apartment with the daughter of the owner : so here was nothing to be done either.

The Italians began to grow impatient at these difficulties, and Mazzuolo proposed a change in their tactics. On the previous evening, the weather being very cold, Madame Louison had ordered a fire in her chamber. She would doubtless do the same on the ensuing night ; and all they had to do was to fill the stove with charcoal, and her death would follow in the most natural way in the world. They were to pass the night at Nuremberg ; and, as soon as they arrived, Karl was sent out to procure the charcoal ; but, after remaining away a long time, he

came back, saying the shops were all shut, and he could not get any; and as the inn at Nuremberg was not a fit place for any other kind of attack, Adelaide was respited for another four-and-twenty hours.

On the following day, in order to avoid such another *contretemps*, the charcoal was secured in the morning whilst they were changing horses, and placed in a sack under the seat of the carriage.

It happened on this day that the road was very hilly, and as the horses slowly dragged the vehicle up the ascents, Madame Louison proposed walking to warm themselves. They all descended; but Tina, being stout, and heavy on her feet, was soon tired, and got in again; whilst Mazzuolo, with a view to his design against Adelaide, fell into conversation with the driver about the different stations they would have to stop at. He wanted to extract all the information he could obtain, so he walked

beside the carriage, whilst Madame Louison and Karl, who were very cold, walked on as fast as they could.

“ You look quite chilled, Karl,” said she ; “ let us see who will be at the top of the hill first ; a race will warm us.”

The youth strode on without saying anything ; but as she was the more active, she got before him ; and when she reached the top, she turned round, and playfully clapping her hands, said, “ Karl, I’ve beaten you !” Karl said he had had an illness lately, and was not so strong as he used to be ; he had gone into the water when he was very warm, and had nearly died of the consequences. This led her to observe how thinly he was clad ; and when the carriage overtook them, she proposed that, as there was plenty of room, he should go inside ; to which the others, as they did not want him to fall ill upon their hands, consented. With the glasses up, and the furs that the party were

wrapt in, the inside of the carriage was very different to the out; and Karl's nose and cheeks, which had before been blue, resumed their original hues.

It was late when they reached their night station, and, whilst the ladies went up stairs to look at their rooms, Karl received his orders, which were, that he should fill the stove with charcoal, and set fire to it, whilst the others were at table. The lad answered composedly that he would. "And when you have done it," said Mazzuolo, "give me a wink, and I will step out to see that all is right before she goes to her room."

Karl obeyed his directions to a tittle, and when all was ready, he gave the signal, and Mazzuolo, making a pretext, quitted the table. He found the arrangements quite satisfactory, and having taken care to see that the window was well closed, he returned to the supper-room. He was no sooner gone, than the boy took the charcoal from the stove, and

threw it into the street ; and when Adelaide came to undress, there was no fire. Cold as it was, however, she had no alternative but to go to bed without one, for there was no bell in the apartment ; and Mazzuolo, who had lighted her to the door, had locked her in, under pretence of caring for her safety.

Karl, having watched this proceeding, accompanied him back to the supper-table, where they discussed the plans for the following day. Whether would it be better to start in the morning without inquiring for her at all, and leave the people of the house to find her dead, when they were far on the road, or whether make the discovery themselves ? Karl ventured to advocate the first plan ; but Tina decided for the second. It would be easy to say that the lad had put charcoal in the stove, not being aware of its effects ; and there would be an end of the matter. If they left her behind, it would be avowing the murder. This settled, they went to bed.

What to do, Karl did not know. He was naturally a stupid sort of lad, and what little sense nature had given him, had been nearly beaten out of him by harsh treatment. He had had a miserable life in a rude and unhappy home, and had never found himself so comfortable as he was now with his aunt and her husband. They were kind to him, because they wanted to make use of him. He did not want to offend them, nor to leave them; for if he did, he must return home again, which he dreaded above all things. Yet there was something in him that recoiled against killing the lady. Grossly ignorant as he was, scarcely knowing right from wrong, it was not morality or religion that deterred him from the crime; for he had a very imperfect idea of the amount of the wickedness he would be committing in taking away the life of a fellow-creature. Obedience was the only virtue he had been taught; and what those in authority over him had ordered him to do,

he would, under most circumstances, have done without question. To kill his beauteous travelling companion, who had shown him such kindness, was, however, repugnant to feelings he could not explain even to himself. Yet he had not sufficient grasp of intellect to know how he was to elude the performance of the task. The only thing he could think of in the meanwhile was to take the charcoal out of the stove; and he did it; after which he went to sleep, and left the results to be developed by the morning.

He had been desired to rise early; and when he quitted his room, he found Mazzuolo and his wife already stirring. They bade him go below and send up breakfast, and to be careful that it was brought by the people of the house. This was done; and when the waiter and the host were present, Tina took the opportunity of knocking at Madame Louison's door, and bidding her rise. To the great amazement of the two Italians, she



answered with alacrity that she was nearly dressed, and should be with them immediately. They stared at each other ; but presently she opened the door, and appeared as fresh as ever ; observing, however, that she had been very cold, for that the fire had gone out before she went to bed. This accounted for the whole thing, and Karl escaped all blame.

During the ensuing day nothing remarkable occurred : fresh charcoal was provided ; but at night it was found there were no stoves in the bed-chambers ; and as the houses on the road they were travelling were poor and ill-furnished—all the good inns having been dismantled by the troops—the same thing happened at several successive stations.

The delay began to render the affair critical, for they were daily drawing near Augsburg, where M. Louison was to meet his wife ; and Mazzuolo resolved to conclude the business by a *coup de main*. He had learnt

from the postilion that the little post-house which was to form their next night's lodging was admirably fitted for a deed of mischief. It lay at the foot of a precipice, in a gorge of the mountains: the district was lonely, and the people rude, not likely to be very much disturbed, even if they did suspect the lady had come unfairly to her end. It was not, however, probable that the charcoal would be of any use on this occasion; the place was too poor to be well furnished with stoves; so Karl was instructed in what he would have to do.

"When she is asleep," said Mazzuolo, "you must give her a blow on the head that will be sufficient to stun her. Then we will complete the job; and as we shall start early in the morning with Tina in female attire, they will never miss her."

Karl, as usual, made no objection; and when they arrived at night at the inn, which fully answered the description given, and was

as lonely as the worst assassins could desire, the two men sallied forth to seek a convenient place for disposing of the body. Neither had they much difficulty in finding what they wanted: there was not only a mountain torrent hard by, but there was also a deep mysterious hole in a neighbouring field, that looked very much as if the body of the young traveller would not be the first that had found a grave there.

Every circumstance seemed to favour the enterprise; and, all arrangements made, the two men returned to the house. Karl thought it was all over with him now. He was too timid to oppose Mazzuolo, and he had nobody to consult. Tina had found a weapon apt for the purpose, which she had already secured; and when they sat down to supper, considering the completeness of the preparations, nobody would have thought Adelaide's life worth six hours' purchase. However, she was not destined to die that

night. Just as they had finished their supper, the sound of wheels was heard; then there was a great noise and bustle below; and Karl being sent down to inquire what was the matter, was informed that a large party of travellers had arrived; and as there was a scarcity of apartments, it was hoped the lady and gentlemen would accommodate the strangers by allowing them to share theirs. Consent was inevitable; so, like the Sultan's wife in the Arabian tale, the victim was allowed to live another day.

"Now," said Mazzuolo, "we have only two nights more before we reach Augsburg, so there must be no shilly-shallying about the matter. If there is a stove in the room to-night, we may try that; though, if the house be in a pretty safe situation, I should prefer more decisive measures. The charcoal has failed once already."

"That was from bad management," said Tina; "we could be secure against such an

accident on another occasion. At the same time, if the situation be favourable, I should prefer a *coup de main*."

When they arrived at their night's station, the absence of a stove decided the question. It was merely a post-house, a place where horses were furnished; the accommodation was poor, and the people disposed to pay little attention to them. Close by ran a river, which obviated all difficulty as to the disposal of the body.

"The thing must be done to-night," said Mazzuolo; and Karl said nothing to the contrary. He also feared that it must; for he did not see how he could avoid it. His aunt said everything necessary to inspire him with courage and determination, and made many promises of future benefits; whilst Mazzuolo neither doubted his obedience nor his resolution, and spoke of the thing as so entirely within the range of ordinary proceedings, that the boy, stupid and ignorant, and accus-

tomed, from the state of the country, to hear of bloodshed and murders little less atrocious committed by the soldiery, and neither punished nor severely condemned, felt ashamed of his own pusillanimity—for such his instinctive pity appeared to himself.

But as he stood opposite Madame Louison at supper, with his eyes, as usual, fixed upon her face, his heart involuntarily quailed when he thought that within a few hours he was to raise his hand against that beautiful head ; yet he still felt within himself no courage to refuse, nor any fertility of expedient to elude the dilemma.

When supper was over, Tina desired Karl to bring up two or three pails of warm water, and several cloths. “ For,” said she, “ it will do us all good to bathe our feet.” Whereupon Adelaide requested one might be carried to her room, which was done by Karl. He was now alone with her, and it was almost the first time he had been so, except when they

ran up the hill together, since the day they met. When he had set down the pail by her bedside, he stood looking at her with a strange expression of countenance. He knew that the water he had fetched up was designed for the purpose of washing away the blood he was about to spill, and he longed to tell her so, and set her on her guard; but he was afraid. He looked at her, looked at the water, and looked at the bed.

"Well, Karl," she said, laughing; "good night! When we part the day after tomorrow, I shan't forget your services, I assure you."

The lad's eyes still wandered from her to the water and the bed, but he said nothing, nor stirred till she repeated "Good night!" and then he quitted the room in silence.

"Poor, stupid creature!" thought Adelaide. "He has scarcely as much intelligence as the horses that draw us."

"Now, we must have no bungling to-night,

Karl," said Mazzuolo. "We will keep quiet till two o'clock, and then, when everybody is asleep, we'll to business."

"But what is it to be done with?" inquired Tina.

"There's something in the carriage, under the seat. I brought it away the night we slept at Baireuth," replied Mazzuolo. "I'll step and fetch it," and he left the room, but presently returned, saying there were people in the stable-yard, and he was afraid they might wonder what he was going to do with so suspicious-looking an instrument. "Karl can fetch it when they are gone to bed."

As it was yet only midnight, Tina proposed that they should all lie down and take a little rest; and the suggestion being agreed to, she and her husband stretched themselves on their bed, whilst Karl made the floor his couch, and, favoured by his unexcitable temperament, was soon asleep, in spite of what was before him.



It was past two o'clock when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder. "Come, be stirring," said Mazzuolo; "we must about it without delay—the house has been quiet for some time."

Karl was a heavy sleeper, and as he sat up rubbing his eyes, he could not at first remember what he was awakened for, nor how he came to be upon the floor. "Come," said Mazzuolo, "come she's fast asleep; I have just been to her room to look at her. You must step down now to the carriage and bring up the axe I left under the seat."

Karl began to recollect himself, and, awkwardly rising from his hard couch, shaking and stretching himself like a dog, he prepared to obey, indifferent to everything at the moment, but the annoyance of being disturbed in his slumbers. "If you should meet anybody," said Mazzuolo, "say that your mistress is ill, and that you are going to fetch the medicine-chest."

By the time he got below, the motion and the cool air had aroused the lad, and, with his recollection, revived his repugnance to the work before him ; but he saw no means of avoiding it, and with an unwilling step he proceeded to the yard where the carriage stood, and having found the axe, he was returning with it, when he observed hanging against the wall a large horn or trumpet. Now, he had seen such a thing at several of the post-houses on the road, and he remembered to have heard one sounded on the night they slept in the mountains, when the travellers arrived late, and prevented the assassination. Instinctively, and without pausing to reflect how he should excuse himself—for if he had, he could not have done it—he placed the instrument to his mouth, and lustily blew it ; and then, terrified at his temerity, and its probable consequences, rushed into the house, and up the stairs again to his master.

"The travellers' horn !" said Mazzuolo, frantically. The lad was too frightened to speak, but stood still, pale and trembling. "Wait," continued the Italian ; " perhaps it may only be for horses, and they may go on again. I hear the people stirring."

Feet were indeed heard upon the stairs, and presently a lantern gleamed beneath the window. "I hear no carriage," observed Mazzuolo. And for some time they sat listening ; but there being no appearance of any travellers, he said he would go below and see how matters stood.

"Nobody is yet arrived," said the master of the post-house in answer to his inquiries ; " but doubtless the signal was given by the avant-courier, who has rode on to the next station ; and the carriage will be here presently. We must be ready with the horses."

As the travellers, however, did not arrive, but continued to be expected, the postmaster

and the postilions remained up to watch for them; and when four o'clock came, Karl was bidden to go to bed, as nothing could be attempted under such circumstances.

"Now," said Mazzuolo on the following day, "we sleep to-night at Meiningen, which is our last station. I know the place; it is too busy a house for a *coup de main*; we must try the charcoal again; but this time we must be sure of our game."

Karl hoped there might be no stoves in the bed-chamber; but it was a well-furnished house, and there were. Adelaide said how glad she should be to have a fire again, she had suffered so much by the want of one, and desired Karl to light hers early. It appeared, however, that the servant of the house had already done it. Mazzuolo said, "So much the better. The stove will get well heated, and when you put in the charcoal, there will be no danger of its not burning." And Tina suggested that that

should not be done till just before Adelaide went to bed, lest she should perceive the effects of the vapour whilst she was undressing.

The young traveller had never, on her journey, been in such high spirits as to-night. Well she might; it had been so prosperously performed, and to-morrow she was to meet her husband. She prattled and laughed during supper with a light heart; expressed her gratitude to the Italians for their protection; and said that, if Monsieur Louison could be of any use to them, she knew how happy he would be to acknowledge their kindness to her. "Really," she said, "travelling at such a period, with so many valuables, and such a large sum of money as I have with me, was a bold undertaking!"

Mazzuolo, during the first part of her speech, was beginning to weigh the advantages of the commissary's favour against the

dangers and difficulties of the assassination—difficulties which had far exceeded his expectations, and dangers which were of course augmented by the proximity to Augsburg—but the latter part of it decided the question; the money and valuables preponderated in the scale, and the good opinion of the commissary kicked the beam.

Partly from the exaltation of her spirits, and partly because the day's journey had been a short one—for the stoppage at Meiningen was quite unnecessary, as they were within four hours of Augsburg, and might very well have reached it—Adelaide was less fatigued and less willing to go to bed than usual. She sat late; and it was past twelve when, having asked for her candle, Karl received the signal to go and prepare the stove. Mazzuolo followed him out, to see that the work was well done, and the charcoal ignited before she went to her room. When all was ready, her candle was put into

her hand, and Mazzuolo having conducted her to the door, took the precaution of turning the key, which he afterwards put in his pocket. She rallied him on the strictness of his guardianship; but he alleged gravely that the house was a busy one, and she might perchance be disturbed if her door were not secured.

They listened till she was in bed, and then Mazzuolo said that they could not do better than go to bed too; "for," said he, "the earlier we are off in the morning the better. There will be the fewer people up, and the less chance of her being missed."

When Karl reached his room, he sat down on the side of his bed and reflected. He had observed that the last thing Mazzuolo had done before leaving Adelaide's chamber, was to see that the window was well closed. "If I could open it," thought he, "to-morrow we shall be at Augsburg, and then I should not be told any more to kill her. I wish I

could. They'll go away in the morning before she is awake, and so I should never be found out." With this idea in his head, he went down stairs, and letting himself out, he crept round to the end of the house where her window was.

She slept on the first floor, and the difficulty was how to reach it; but this was soon overcome. In the stable-yard stood some high steps, used for the convenience of passengers when they mounted the waggons and diligences. These he carried to the spot, and having reached the window, he was about to break some of the panes, since, as it fastened on the inside, he could not open it, when it occurred to him that the noise might wake her, and cause an alarm that would betray him. The window, however, was loosely fitted in the lattice fashion, and he saw that, by a little contrivance, he could lift it off the hinges. He did so, and drew aside the curtain; there lay the intended victim



in a sound sleep; so sound that Karl thought he might safely step in without disturbing her. There she lay in her beauty.

He could not tell why, but, as he stood and looked at her, he felt that he *must* save her at all risks. The air he had let in might not be enough; he would take the charcoal from the stove and throw it out of the window; but what if she awoke with the noise, and screamed? He hesitated a moment; but he remembered that this would be a safer plan than leaving the window open, as that might be observed in the morning from below, and he would thus be betrayed. So, as quietly as possible, he emptied the stove, burning his hand severely in the operation, and then, having sufficiently aired the room, he hung on the window again, and retired.

During the whole of these operations Adelaide had remained quite still, and appeared to be sound asleep. But was she?

No. The opening of the window had awakened her: surprise and terror had at first kept her silent—a surprise and terror that were by no means diminished by discovering who the intruder was. Although she had always spoken kindly to Karl, and even endeavoured, by the amenity of her manner, to soften his rude nature, she had from the first moment, felt his appearance most repulsive, and disliked him exceedingly; a dislike that was not diminished by the persevering stare of his dull eyes, which she found at all opportunities, fixed upon her face: so that when she saw him entering her room through her window, she did not doubt that he was come for some very bad purpose. She hoped the worst he intended was to rob her, although the booty he was likely to get was small, since her trunks, with all her valuable property, were nightly placed under Mazzuolo's care for safety. Still, the little money she carried in her

purse, together with her rings and watch, would be a great deal for so poor a creature; and expecting to see him possess himself of these, she thought it more prudent to lie still, and feign sleep, than to disturb him. But when she found that all he came for was to take the fire out of the stove, she was beyond measure puzzled to conceive his motive. Could it be a jest? But what a strange jest! However, he did nothing else; he touched neither her money nor her watch, though both were lying on the table, but went away as empty-handed as he came.

The amazement and alarm that so extraordinary a visit inspired, drove sleep from her eyes, and it was not till the day dawned that she so far recovered her composure and sense of safety, as to close them in slumber. Then, however, fatigue got the better of her watchfulness, and she gradually sunk into a sound sleep.

In the meantime, Karl, whose unexcitable

temperament insured him his night's rest, even under the most agitating circumstances, was in a happy state of oblivion of the whole affair, when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, and heard his uncle say :

“Come, come! rise, and make haste! The sun is up, and we must get the horses out and be off.”

Karl was as anxious to be off as anybody; the sooner the better for him; for if Adelaide should awake before they started, he, on the one hand, dreaded that he might incur his uncle's suspicion, and, on the other, that some new plot might be formed, which it would be impossible for him to evade; so, between the exertions of one and the other, the horses were out, the bill paid, and the carriage at the door, very soon after the sun had shown his broad disc above the horizon. Tina, in female attire and a veil, was handed down stairs by Mazzuolo; the waiter stood on the steps and bowed, for the landlord was not yet

up ; they all three stepped into the carriage ; the postilion cracked his whip, and away they drove, rejoicing.

In the meantime, Monsieur Louison had become very uneasy about his wife. He had received no intelligence since she quitted Dresden ; for although she had, in fact, written more than once, Mazzuolo had not forwarded the letters. Day after day he had waited in impatient expectation ; till, at length, unable to bear his suspense any longer, he resolved to start on the road she was to come, in the hope of meeting her. When he reached the gate called the Gözzinger, his carriage was stopped by a berlin containing two men and a woman. It was loaded with luggage, and, thinking that this might be the party he expected, he jumped down, and put his head into the window of the berlin, to ascertain if his wife was there. She was not : so, with a bow and an apology, he proceeded on his way.

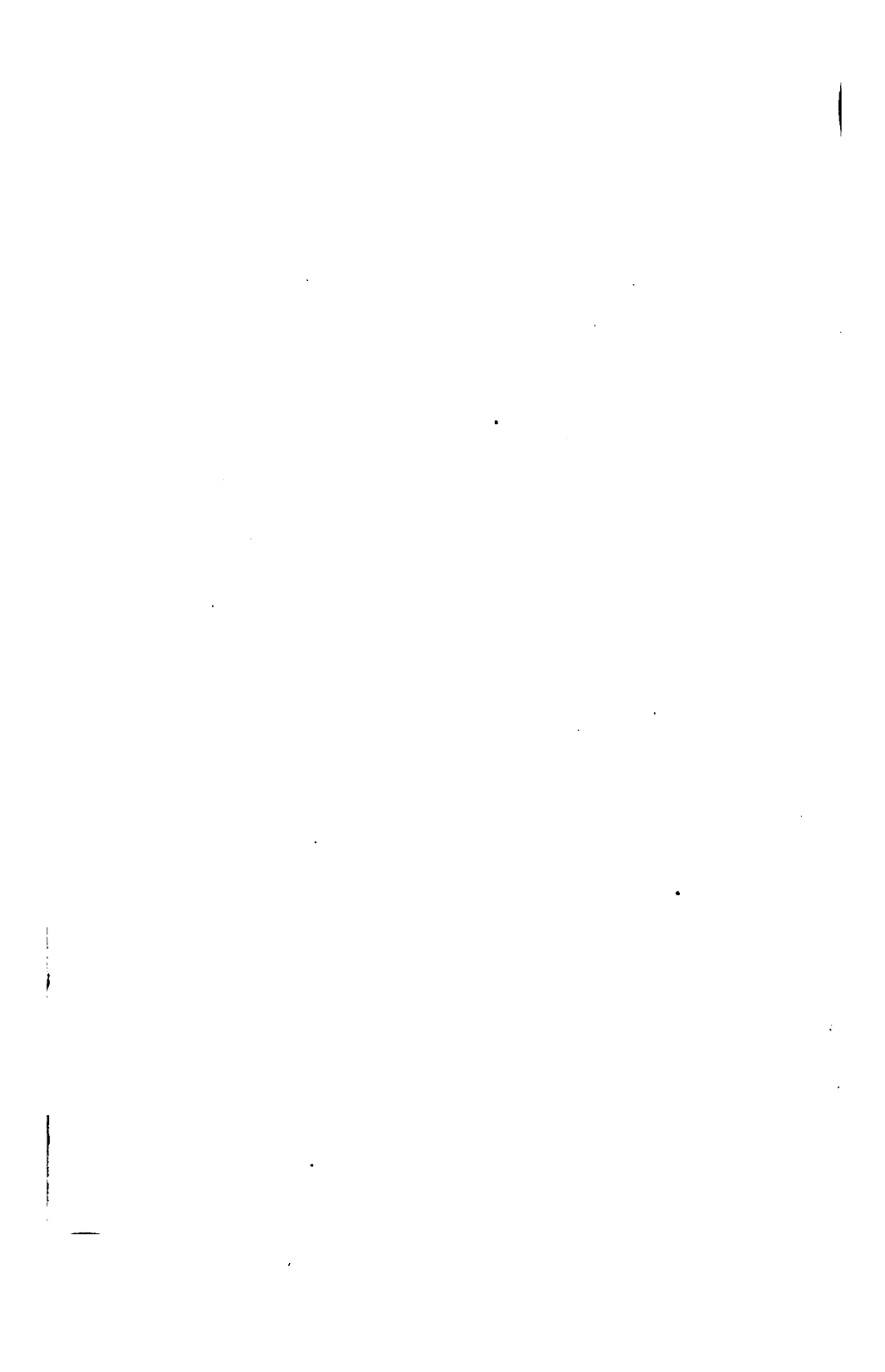
At Meiningen, he stopped to change horses ; and the first question that was asked him was, if he had seen a heavily-laden berlin, containing two men and a woman. On answering in the affirmative, he was informed that they had gone off with the property of a lady, whom they had left behind, and who was then in the inn ; and in a moment more the young husband pressed his bride to his heart. Eager to chase the thieves, however, they wasted no time in embraces, but started instantly in pursuit of them. On reaching the same gate where the berlin had been seen, the officers described in what direction the party had driven ; and the police being immediately on the alert, the criminals were discovered and arrested just as they were on the point of starting for Vienna.

The ample confession of Karl disclosed the villany of the Italians, and made known how narrowly the commissary had escaped the loss of his fair young bride ; whilst, as he told his

rude and simple tale, without claiming any merit, or appearing to be conscious of any, Adelaide learnt that to this repulsive, stupid clown she had three times owed her life.

The Italians were condemned to the galleys ; whilst Monsieur Louison and his wife discharged their debt of gratitude to Karl, by first educating him, and then furnishing him with the means of earning his living with respectability and comfort.

De Monge was degraded from his situation, and the universal execration that pursued him, drove him ultimately to America, where, under a feigned name, he ended his days in obscurity.





## I.

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# THE MONEY-SEEKERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

"PRAY, sir," said a little man, who, with a great-coat buttoned up to his chin, and a red worsted comforter round his throat, was standing in front of the Glo'ster Coffee House, in Piccadilly, one cold winter's morning,—“are you waiting for the Telegraph?”

“Yes, I am, sir,” answered the person he addressed, who was a handsome, gentlemanly-looking youth, somewhat above twenty,

—"I wish with all my soul it would come, for it's devilish cold standing here."

"It'll be up directly, sir," said a porter, touching his hat.

"There's a fire in the office if you like to walk in, sir," said a clerk, who just then came to the door.

"No, thank ye," answered the impatient traveller; "I want to be off."

"So do I, sir," said the little man who had first spoken; "but as we can't get off till the coach comes, we may as well take advantage of the fire."

"I am not cold," answered the young man, walking rapidly backwards and forwards, with his hands in his pockets, and forgetting that he had just asserted that he *was* cold. "I thought the coach started from here at half-past six?"

"Seven, sir," said the porter.

"They always tell you half-past six for seven," said the little man.

"I wish they'd be a little more punctual," exclaimed the other.

"There's seven striking now, and here's the coach coming up," said the porter; and at the same moment, the well-appointed vehicle turned out of St. James's Street, and dashed up to the inn door: the ostler placed himself at the horses' heads, the coachman flung down his ribbons, and rolling off the box, turned into the office, whilst the porters began to throw up the boxes and portmanteaus that were accumulated on the pavement. Several other passengers, also, who had been lounging in the street, or warming themselves at the fire, now drew near, and began to take their seats.

"Inside or out, sir?" said the coachman, issuing from the office, with the way-bill in his hand.

"Inside," answered the impatient traveller.

"Then we shall have the pleasure of

travelling together," observed the little man who had first spoken.

The gentleman he addressed did not look as if he foresaw much pleasure in the companionship. However, they both stepped in; and, all other preliminaries being arranged, the coachman mounted his box, and away.

"Stop! stop" screamed a female voice—"Hoigh! hoigh!" cried the men at the inn door.

"Is that the Bath coach?" asked the belated passenger.

"No room outside," cried the coachman.

"No room!" exclaimed the indignant girl.—"Why, our John took my place a week ago, and saw it booked himself!"

"Did he, my dear?" said the coachman; "why then I s'pose we must give you an inside. Put her inside, Bill, till we drop somebody upon the road, and put that 'ere bandbox into the boot."

These orders were quickly obeyed, and, once more, the coach started on its way, with its three insides and its full complement out.

After the first glance at each other, the former, till they had got off the stones and proceeded some distance beyond Hyde Park Gates, seemed sufficiently occupied with peering through the dim glass at the houses that lined the road they were flying through. Probably, however, in reality, not one of the party was thinking anything about the material objects to which their eyes were directed. Their thoughts were with what they had left, or what they were going to. Jenny Spike, for example, was thinking of John, the footman at the place she was just leaving, wondering much that he had not made her the proposals of marriage which she had been daily expecting for the last six months ; but concluding that, as he had not taken the trouble to leave his bed on that morning early enough to conduct

her to the coach, he had no design of carrying his attentions any further, she determined to banish him from her heart for ever. Following up this resolution by fixing her mind, with uncommon fortitude, on the visionary image of the footman yet unseen, with whom she was next to be domesticated, she considered it highly probable that he would be tall and thin, and interesting and amiable, because she had observed those to be the attributes of footmen in general; and that he would be struck with her she could not doubt, for that had been another peculiarity attending all the footmen she had yet lived with, a circumstance which caused her to look upon it as something rather inexplicable that she should still be called *Miss Spike*.

The thoughts of the little man, who was a lawyer, and whose name was Mr. James Pilrig, were intent upon the condition of a purchase that he was travelling into the country to effect for a client of his; starting

from which point, they took a rapid survey of the many and complicated affairs of that gentleman, concluding with congratulating himself on having so desirable a client; whilst his mind, for a single moment, dwelt on the possibility that, if he transacted the old man's business very much to his satisfaction, a codicil, in which his own name should appear, might be added to the testamentary document he had lately been engaged in drawing up. This was uncertain; but, in the meantime, the being employed at all by so wealthy an individual, was extremely gratifying, and would, infallibly, be the means of introducing him to more business, not to mention the beautiful bills of costs in all their lovely longitude, and leaves "thick as the leaves of Valombrosa" that presented themselves to his delighted fancy. The truth was, that Mr. James Pilrig's success in business had not hitherto been great; he had had no opportunity of

getting into a profitable line, and he looked upon his employment by this gentleman as his first step towards fortune. "Let the world but know that I am the confidential agent of Obiah Livingstone, Esquire, and my name is up, was the agreeable conviction with which he closed his cogitations on the subject.

With respect to the impatient traveller, he had his thoughts too, not less engrossing than those of his companions, but the subject of them we shall leave time and the course of this history to disclose.

In the meanwhile, Mr. James Pilrig, having wound up his reflections, in the satisfactory manner we have indicated, began to feel a disposition to loose his tongue and unlock the casket of his thoughts; so, rousing himself from his air of pre-occupation, he rubbed his hands, and, turning briskly to his fellow-traveller, remarked that he supposed the coach would stop to breakfast



about nine o'clock—a proposition which the gentleman addressed did not seem to feel himself called upon either to affirm or deny, and to which, therefore, he said nothing; but Mr. Pilrig, who, for the reasons above mentioned, was feeling extremely comfortable, was not to be depressed by one failure; so, turning his attention to Jenny Spike, he asked her if she was going all the way to Bath—a question which that young lady unreservedly answered in the affirmative, following up the conversation by an inquiry as to what hour the coach was likely to arrive there. Neither did it require much encouragement to make her further communicative; and before they reached their breakfast station, with the exception of the loves of the footmen, Mr. Pilrig was in possession of the leading events of Miss Spike's history, which, however, were not sufficiently remarkable to be set down here. The conclusion was that she had left her

last place, where she was housemaid, because, after being always accustomed to wait on her mistress, that lady had thought proper to engage a regular lady's-maid, "and she wasn't going for to be under her, in course—a proud, conceited minx!" and, indeed, she confessed that not only this lady's-maid in particular, but all lady's-maids without exception, were the objects of her especial aversion; and she did not scruple to confide to Mr. Pilrig her firm determination never to live in the house where "one of that sort was. The airs they give themselves," she assured him, "wasn't to be told; and, for her part, she never could abide 'em!"

This conversation lasted Mr. Pilrig till the coach stopped for breakfast; and when they started again, they found the fourth seat occupied by another passenger, and one who, to the chatty little lawyer's satisfaction, appeared perfectly well disposed for conversation. He was a man apparently about five-

and-thirty years of age, well dressed, sleek, and not ill-looking ; his manners were confident, and his mode of speaking plausible. Benevolence seemed to be his favourite virtue ; and he had delivered himself of several very amiable sentiments before he had been in the coach half an hour. Nor was he less communicative with respect to his own affairs, informing the company that he had been to Maidenhead, to look at an estate that was to be sold in that neighbourhood, but he had found it so inferior to the auctioneer's description of it that he was quite disgusted. In short, he said, the extravagant romancing with which those gentlemen, the auctioneers, amused themselves and perplexed their customers were quite vexatious. They kept him running from one end of the island to the other, looking for what he never found ; the hanging woods, and velvet lawns, and silver streams, appeared nowhere but in their

advertisements. He then proceeded to draw a splendid picture of the sort of place he wanted ; and, altogether, talked in a manner that could not fail to inspire his hearers with a magnificent idea of his fortune and a profound veneration of his person. At least, if they were not so impressed, the fault must have been theirs not his ; and, accordingly, Mr. Pilrig, for one, yielded without a struggle to the fascination. Miss Spike would, no doubt, have been equally enchanted, had she been able to discover any possible connection between the wealth of her fellow-traveller and the advancement of her own fortune, but she did not ; and as for the impatient gentleman by her side, he appeared too much wrapt in his own reflections to be conscious of anything that was going on.

But the lawyer was subdued ; a man evidently of immense fortune and high connections, running about the world to look for an estate, and not able to find one magnifi-

cent enough for his purpose—the idea was sublime! And, then, there was so much urbanity, so much frankness, not the slightest reserve about his affairs: he wondered who was his agent! How desirable it was that he should have somebody who could relieve him from part of the trouble of pursuing these unattainable beauties, or, at least, prevent his being deluded by the excursive fancies of the auctioneers! In short, Mr. Pilrig perceived at once that which Miss Spike had failed to discern in her own case; he saw that a very agreeable connection might be established between the stranger's purse and his own pocket. He therefore felt he was only doing justice to himself, when he seized the opportunity of a pause in the monologue—for such it had hitherto nearly been—to hint that he was himself a professional man, and to insinuate delicately that no one understood his business better; taking occasion to cite several instances in which, through his acute-

ness and penetration, enormous sums had been saved to his clients. He observed, that gentlemen about to purchase estates could not be too cautious in selecting a man of business to examine the title-deeds—some one who thoroughly understood the thing; he himself had had considerable experience in that line, and he flattered himself had been the means of preventing a great deal of mischief.

These words appeared by no means to fall upon an inattentive ear; the stranger seemed struck with Mr. Pilrig's account of Mr. Pilrig; he asked his opinion on several knotty points, and gently insinuated that whenever he met with anything to suit him, he should like very much to have the affair looked into by a gentleman who seemed so thoroughly conversant with the subject. Mr. Pilrig felt flattered, and became excited and voluble; he had evidently made a hit, and he resolved to clench it; so, with a significant nod, he

avowed that he was then on his way into Somersetshire for the purpose of transacting a little private business for a client of his, one of the richest men in the country—no less a person than the great Obiah Livingstone. He placed his hand beside his mouth, and stooped forward to meet the stranger's ear when he pronounced the awful name; but the whisper was so loud, that if there had been twenty people in the coach, they might have heard it, and he would, probably, have been sorry if they had not. The impression made on the present company, however, except the stranger, seemed very slight. Jenny Spike had never heard of Mr. Livingstone in her life, and appeared totally unmoved; the impatient traveller slightly turned his head as the name reached his ears, as if he, like the rest of the world, had heard of the enormous wealth imputed to the owner, but he immediately resumed his former position, and seemed to take no further

interest in the conversation. But he for whom the hit was intended, was evidently struck:—"Indeed!" cried he, with evident astonishment; "you surprise me. I have no acquaintance with Mr. Livingstone whatever; but I had always understood that Wright and Miller were his solicitors"—and Mr. Pilrig felt that he looked a little incredulous.

"Yes," said he, "for general business—general business, he does employ Wright and Miller; but for anything of a particular nature—you understand me—confidential"—and Mr. Pilrig nodded, as much as to say, "I am the man."

The stranger then fell to asking a variety of questions about Mr. Livingstone, as of a person whose great wealth and eccentric character rendered him an object of legitimate curiosity to the world; all of which Mr. Pilrig answered, to the best of his knowledge, with evident pride and pleasure.



"Among other strange peculiarities he has," observed the stranger, "I understand he is determined never to make a will."

"That's a mistake, sir," said Mr. Pilrig; "he *has* made a will." And when he had said this, he knitted his brow, folded his lips, and looked out of the corner of his eye at nothing, as who should say, "There's a weighty matter for you! There's a bone for you to pick! I'm not going to say any more; I'm going to think of something else, while you digest that as well as you can."

"Well," said the stranger, in a tone of *bonhomie*, "I am glad of it—very glad of it, indeed. As I said before, I know nothing of Mr. Livingstone, nor of anybody belonging to him; but I think it's always a pity when a man of his fortune does not provide handsomely for his connexions, but allows his wealth to fall into the hands of a single person, who perhaps doesn't deserve it; I mean, of course, where there are no children.

I believe Mr. Livingstone is not married? At least, I never understood that he had any family."

"He never was married, sir," said Mr. Pilrig.

"I thought I had heard as much," replied the stranger, with assumed indifference; "but every man who, like Mr. Livingstone, has been the architect of his own fortune, must, necessarily, have poor relations; brothers and sisters, who have not been able to keep pace with him; nephews and nieces, perhaps, who have no means of rising but through the assistance of their rich uncle. Now, how much better is a fortune bestowed, when divided amongst ten or a dozen such worthy persons, or even half a dozen, than if the whole were accumulated on the head of one thankless, good-for-nothing spendthrift. I trust Mr. Livingstone, under the influence of your advice, has avoided an error so common to wealthy persons."

"Ah, sir," replied Mr. Pilrig, "if these moneyed men could be induced to take advice! But when once they have got a crotchet into their heads about the disposal of their property, the devil himself can't get it out again. What would you think, now, if Mr. Livingstone were to leave every stiver of his fortune—a few small annuities excepted—every stiver of his immense fortune to a person who is no relation to him, a person whom he never saw, and not only whom he never saw, but whom he never intends to see! I don't say that it is so; I only ask you if that wouldn't be a whim worthy of a millionaire?"

"God bless me!" exclaimed the stranger, looking astonished, and at the same time mysterious and confidential; as much as to say, "Of course, you're quite safe with me, this conversation is strictly private, and will go no further." "God bless me, you don't say so! A person whom he never saw, and whom he never intends to see! It's one of

the most singular caprices I ever heard in my life. But what's the motive? What's the connexion?"

"None, sir; no connexion at all. The young man's a son of an old college chum, a poor parson, who never had more than three hundred a year in his life; and the youth himself no more expects to inherit the fortune than you do."

"What's his name?" asked the stranger.

"Gerald Gage," replied Mr. Pilrig.

Now, when Mr. Pilrig commenced these disclosures, which he had done with the view of giving himself importance, and gaining the confidence of his wealthy fellow-traveller, he had not the most distant intention of exceeding, what he considered, the bounds of prudence and professional faith; but his own vanity and love of talking on the one hand, and the leading questions of the stranger on the other, had enticed him on from one stage to another, till, at last, when the final ques-

tion was put to him, quite unexpectedly—put, too, with an air that evinced no consciousness of impropriety, nor implied any doubt of a ready answer—he had not presence of mind, or resolution to draw back. To have declined answering would have been a reproof to the asker, well-merited, certainly; but the easy confidence and *bonhomie* of the stranger, disarmed him, his apparent wealth and high connexion dazzled and awed him, and his own imprudence confounded him—so that, well-merited, as he felt it would have been, he had not resolution to administer it. But the words had no sooner passed his lips than he would have given the world to recall them. He cast an uneasy glance at his other two fellow-travellers. Jenny Spike was looking out of the window, with an air that plainly indicated it was perfectly indifferent to her who Mr. Livingstone left his fortune to; but the eyes of the impatient gentleman

were turned upon him with an expression of the most unbounded amazement.

Mr. Pilrig blushed to his fingers' ends, and felt all over in a heat; he could not wonder at the young man's surprise at such unpardonable indiscretion; he could have bitten off his tongue with vexation; whilst his reverence for the stranger, extinguished by his own mortification, was changed into a feeling very like resentment; and, acting upon the old adage, "when the steed is stolen," he resolved to close his lips for the remainder of the journey, and not answer another question upon any provocation whatever. But this resolution, wise as late, soon appeared to be also superfluous; nobody seemed disposed to *ask* him any questions. The impatient gentleman, although his countenance still retained its expression of astonishment, and although he cast sundry glances of wonder and curiosity at Mr. Pilrig, con-

tinued as silent as before ; and the stranger, seeming suddenly to have caught the infection, said not another word.

The silence was first broken by Jenny Spike's inquiring, when they entered Marlborough, if that was Bath ; a query which, being addressed to the general society, no one felt himself called upon to respond to, and which, therefore, remained unanswered. The dinner passed over sulkily and silently. As it was the depth of winter, and the sky heavy with snow-clouds, the evening soon closed in after they re-entered the coach, and it became dusk, whereupon the whole party drew into their respective corners, and either went to sleep, or pretended to do so. Jenny's head, however, was the only one whose nodding betokened a genuine slumber, which was first disturbed by the rattling of the coach over the paved streets of Bath. Everybody looked through the windows as the vehicle dashed through the lighted thoroughfares, till a sud-

den stop at the door of the White Hart, announced that those who were going no further than Bath had reached their destination.

The moment the coachman drew up his horses, and before the door could be opened to liberate the passengers, a person, who had been standing at the inn door, advanced, and, putting his head in at the window, appeared to be looking for somebody; but the passengers were in the shade, and undistinguishable.

“ I have a letter,” said he, in a hesitating voice, “ for a gentleman that was to come by this coach.”

But though the passengers were in the shade, the light fell sufficiently upon the face of the messenger to admit of their seeing him, and the impatient traveller immediately held out his hand, as if recognising the man had satisfied him that the packet was for himself.



"Stay!" exclaimed Mr. Pilrig, stretching out his hand also, "*I* expected a letter to meet me here. Perhaps it's for me?"

"No, sir," replied the messenger, who by this time had caught a glimpse of the impatient traveller's physiognomy—"No, sir, it's for this gentleman—it's for Mr. Gerald Gage."

## CHAPTER II.

BEFORE the unexpected announcement with which we closed our last chapter had well escaped the lips of the messenger, Mr. Gerald Gage was upon the pavement. "Get my portmanteau," said he; "it's in the boot, I believe, and take it home. Tell my father I will be there by-and-by."

"I believe master wished to see you, sir," answered the man, touching his hat, "before you go anywhere else."

"Do what I tell you, will you?" said the

young man, impatiently, as he turned to walk away.

"Sir, sir, give me leave—allow me—one word, before you go," cried Mr. Pilrig, hastening after him; "one word, I beg of you."

"I'm in a hurry, sir," replied Gerald; "some other time."

"I'll not detain you a moment," said Mr. Pilrig, "I'll not detain you at all; I'll walk by your side, if you'll give me leave, while I say a few words, that, a circumstance so unforeseen—a—a coincidence so extraordinary—so—so unfortunate, if I may venture to say so, has—has rendered necessary. I have been to blame, sir, very much to blame—I won't attempt to excuse myself—I never was guilty of such a thing in my life, and I'd rather have cut my tongue out than have done it, if I had had time to think what I was about. But I was surprised into it—taken unawares—but, as I said before, sir, I won't attempt to excuse myself; I know

it's impossible. But, good God! sir, when I think what the consequences may be—the consequences to you, sir, if Mr. Livingstone only suspected that you had got an inkling of the matter; such an odd man, sir—a man of the most eccentric character. I say, sir, when I think of what the consequences of my imprudence may be, he'd alter his will, sir—he'd alter it that very hour—”

“And not employ you to make the alteration, I fancy,” said Gerald Gage.

“That's nothing, sir,” panted out Mr. Pilrig, “I'm not to be considered—I should get but what I deserve; but you, sir; the loss of such a fortune—thousands upon thousands—I won't say it may not be a million—a word, sir, a single word—a hint, and it's all smoke, sir—smoke. Mr. Livingstone's an old man, too, sir. It is but keeping silence for a few years—perhaps a few months; and then, sir, what a thing to step into—no incumbrance—everything

clear as the back of my hand; such a fine property—everything so well secured—so, so desirable, sir, in every way—and to lose it all for—for—just for—”

But, by the time he had reached this point of his discourse, Mr. Pilrig was fairly done up. Mr. Gerald Gage was a tall, slender young man, with long legs, and wind like a race-horse. Mr. Pilrig was the reverse of all this; added to which, his expenditure of breath, betwixt his agitation and his eloquence, was tremendous. So, seizing the young man's arm in the desperation of his dilemma, he exclaimed, in the most earnest voice that his lungs would permit :

“For God's sake, sir, stop! stop and speak!”

“What would you have me say, sir?” said Gerald Gage, abruptly turning round, and facing him.

“I want you to reflect, sir, upon the consequences—” began Mr. Pilrig.

"I have no time to reflect, sir," replied the impatient youth. "Besides, sir, it's you that should have reflected on the consequences. But, in two words, what is it you want of me?"

"I want you, sir, to promise that you will never let the secret pass your lips—that you will never mention to anybody whatsoever—the—the circumstance that I have been so unlucky as to—to—"

"Why, sir," interrupted Gerald; "I think I have pretty strong reasons for not mentioning it, since I do not doubt the truth of what you assert, namely, that Mr. Livingstone would alter his intentions if he supposed they were suspected. I only wish you had been as cautious as I shall be. How do you know, sir, that the fellow you have been talking to in the coach will not blazon it all over Bath to-morrow, and that we may not see it in one of the evening papers by the next night?"

"I hope not, sir," said Mr. Pilrig. "A gentleman of his fortune and standing in society would be above doing such a piece of mischief. But I shall hasten back directly, and speak to him on the subject, and endeavour to obtain his promise."

"Then, the sooner you go the better, sir," said Gerald. "And pray learn to be a little more cautious in your communications for the future."

"I shall, sir; you may rely on it, I shall," said the humbled Mr. Pilrig, as he turned his steps towards the White Hart, whilst the eager young man hurried on his way with augmented velocity, to make up for the time he had lost in the above conversation. But, by the time the lawyer reached the inn, the coach had departed on its way to Bristol, and whether the other two inside passengers had gone on with it, or had remained in Bath, the waiter could not inform him. He rather thought he had seen a young woman asking a

porter to carry her box for her ; but, with respect to the gentleman, he had not observed him at all. There was nothing left, therefore, but to trust to the stranger's discretion ; but Mr. Pilrig felt an uneasy conviction that people that ask indiscreet questions are apt not to be good keepers of counsel ; and, although he tried to banish the thing from his mind, and to hope for the best, yet he could not recover his former complaisance.

The consciousness of his imprudence sat heavy on his mind, which occasioned the Welsh rabbit he ate for supper to sit heavy on his stomach. He passed a bad night. His mind was disturbed, and his body restless. He had not only perilled the young man's fortune, but, what was worse, he had perilled his own, just, too, as it was taking a favourable turn. He had not much distrust of the woman ; he thought she had probably not attended to, or not understood, the conversation, sufficiently to comprehend the



importance of what had passed, or its connexion with the final discovery. The stranger was his *bête noire*, and he resolved to pass the following day in hunting for him through the streets and public resorts of Bath, in order, if he could find him, to make an appeal to his honour and good-nature on the subject. But his labour was vain. Unfortunately, he did not know his name; otherwise, he concluded, a man of such eminence would have been easily discovered; and, after bestowing more time on the ineffectual search than he had to spare from his other business, and making vain inquiries of the coachman, who knew nothing about him, he was obliged to return to London, and present himself before his wealthy client, with the painful consciousness that he had betrayed his trust, and a distressing uncertainty of the use that might be made of his imprudence.

In the meantime, Mr. Gerald Gage pursued his course with eager steps, through

street after street, to the outskirts of the city, till he reached a small house, that formed one of a row, called Prospect Place—although, whatever it once might have had, its only prospect now was the back of a similar row of houses on the opposite side of the way.

“She is still up,” said he to himself, as he cast up his eyes to a window in the second floor, through which a faint light glimmered; “that’s fortunate, for I should have gone mad before to-morrow, if I had not seen her;” and, so saying, he advanced eagerly to the door, and knocked.

“I am not too late to see Miss Dering, I perceive,” said he to a respectably-dressed woman, whose appearance denoted her to be the mistress of the house.

“No, sir,” said the woman, half smiling as she admitted him; “you’re time enough yet; but we shan’t have *Miss Dering* much longer, I fancy; I suppose you’ve heard, sir. I’m sure everybody is so glad, for a more

deserving young lady never breathed ; and it was a real pity to see a lady that had been brought up to a carriage, and had the first of educations, and of company too, reduced to such straits as she has been. Few know, sir, but me, what she's had to struggle with, for she always tried to make the best of things, and never complained ; but many a day, to my certain knowledge, a bit of meat has never passed her lips ; and a cup of tea and an egg has been all the nourishment she afforded herself. But they say, when things get to the worst, they must mend ; and I trust, poor young lady, she has seen her worst days, and that she'll be as happy with Mr. Weston as she deserves to be ; for they say he's an excellent gentleman ; and, no doubt, he has a fine fortune, and can keep her as she ought to be kept."

And, as the worthy woman liked Miss Dering, and delighted in the sound of her

own voice, there is no telling to what length the thread of her discourse might have run out; but, just as she concluded the last paragraph, the flame of the candle she held in her right hand having communicated itself to the wick of the one she held in her left, Mr. Gerald Gage, without pausing to listen to what further she might have to say, snatched the latter from her hand, and, ascending the narrow staircase by two steps at a time, was at the door of Miss Dering's apartment before the echo of Mrs. Venn's last words had died away in the passage below.

"Come in," said a sweet female voice, as the handle of the door, half turning, indicated that some one was there. "Is it you, Mrs. Venn?"

There was but one dim light upon the table, beside which the fair tenant of the room sat, diligently plying her needle,

when Gerald threw open the door; and, as he stood there in silence, she started from her seat at perceiving the figure of a man.

"Don't be alarmed, Emily," said he, "it's only me!"

"Gerald!" exclaimed she, in an accent of surprise.

"Yes, Emily," answered he, "it's Gerald; the person you least expected, I fancy, and, perhaps, least *wished* to see."

"I did not expect you, certainly," replied she. "I understood from your father, that, when your shooting was over, you were to spend the rest of the vacation in London, with the Millers."

"Is that a reproach, Emily?" said he. "If it is, I deserve it; richly I deserve it. It's quite true, I did mean to have finished the vacation in London."

"And why should you not?" said she. "It would have been a great pity not to

have availed yourself of so pleasant an invitation."

"So I thought, Emily!" replied Gerald; "and therefore I accepted it. But I should have remembered how easily ~~the~~ absent are forgotten, and have been less confident."

"Confident of what, Gerald?" asked Miss Dering, raising her eyes to his face.

"Of what I thought was my own—of your affection, Emily!" said he.

"That would have been a strange confidence, had you entertained it," said she, assuming more coldness.

"I'll not affect to misunderstand you, Emily," answered Gerald. "You think I have neglected you; and perhaps you are justified in thinking so. The truth is, I *have* been too confident. I thought myself so secure of your affection, that I have not taken sufficient pains to keep alive a sentiment that I fancied too firmly rooted in your heart to be easily ejected."

"You have then been greatly mistaken," said Miss Dering, calmly. "The sentiment you allude to, and the existence of which I do not intend to deny, was awakened by your kindness—shown when I most needed it—but with that kindness it died. Not my gratitude; that still remains and inspires me with the warmest wishes for your happiness."

"Am I to believe this, Emily?" exclaimed Gerald, throwing himself into a chair, and forcing her to seat herself beside him. "I cannot believe it; if I did, there should be but one step between that conviction and a—. But I did not come here to threaten you—that would be like a blackguard; but I came to know my fate definitively; and then, when I know it—"

"What then?" asked Emily, as he paused.

"No matter what," answered Gerald; "to you it will, of course, be indifferent—"

but this night must decide. Mr. Weston is rich, I know it, and I am poor. It is true, you plighted your faith to me, and we exchanged vows of never-ending love ; but faith has been broken ere now, and vows cannot bind a fickle heart. If you are changed—really changed—say so ; and, however hard it may be, I will believe yourself against yourself. But oh, Emily, if,

I believe, your heart is still mine—for I have that confidence in your truth, that what appears arrogance in *me* is but trust in *you*—if you are sacrificing yourself to pique, or selling yourself for wealth—”

“ For wealth ! For bread, you mean,” interrupted Miss Dering. “ I never desired wealth, nor do I desire it now ; but neither *am* I sacrificing myself. It is true I am not in love with Mr. Weston, neither does he suppose I am. He is of an age to want a kind and faithful companion ; and I need a home and a protector. I am satisfied of his worth ;



and he is satisfied that I shall honestly and cheerfully fulfil the duties I undertake. In short, it is a union of prudence on both sides, and therefore likely to be a happy one."

"If your heart were free from any other attachment it might," replied Gerald; "but is it so? Question it, Emily. I know you better than you know yourself. I estimate better your unchanging constancy, the unalienable nature of your affections: it has been on that acquaintance with your character that I have presumed too far. You have felt yourself neglected, and are justly displeased; and you mistake pique and displeasure for indifference. But you will awaken from that delusion by-and-by, when it's too late, and find yourself miserable!"

"No, Gerald!" replied Emily; "no; I'm sure I shall be happy in doing my duty." But her lip trembled, and her voice faltered, as she spoke.

“I tell you, no, Emily!” said Gerald. “If, indeed, you had supposed I had ceased to love you, time and absence and indignation might have banished my image from your heart; and you might then, perhaps, have found your happiness—an insipid, joyless happiness in the performance of the duties you speak of; but it is too late, Emily; it can never be so now. You know it yourself—you feel it. You can never marry Mr. Weston, for now it would be a sacrifice—a hateful sacrifice—a sacrifice from which your heart recoils.”

“Then, O, Gerald!” exclaimed Miss Dering, bursting into tears, “O, Gerald, Gerald! how selfish and how cruel it was of you to come!”

## CHAPTER III.

BEFORE Gerald quitted Miss Dering's lodgings, on that night, he had, as may be supposed, put her in possession of Mr. Pilrig's grand secret; and it was arranged between them, that she should throw herself on Mr. Weston's generosity to forego and to forgive—that is, that she should ask him to release her from the engagement she had entered into but two days before; and to pardon her for the involuntary deception she had practised, and the disappointment she

was about to inflict: and, painful as the dilemma was, she had every confidence in the success of her appeal. For her own part, she was deeply grieved and ashamed; but she knew Mr. Weston was a man of a philosophical mind, and a calm temperament, and she did not apprehend that his pain would be very acute or very durable; and as he was also very reasonable and very benevolent, she felt assured that he would believe what was true—namely, that she had fancied her heart was free when she accepted him; and that he would much rather she told him the truth now, at the expense of inflicting a temporary disappointment, than that she should fulfil her engagement, at the risk of making herself and him permanently miserable. The embarrassment of this communication was, necessarily, the first subject that engrossed her thoughts; but when, on the following day, the letter to Mr. Weston was dispatched, other cares and anxieties came

crowding thick and fast upon her. She knew Gerald well, and although, to her sorrow, she found she loved him still—she loved him in spite of many and great faults. He was handsome, clever, accomplished, and eloquent; but he was impetuous and selfish—and too much the creature of circumstance to be relied upon under *any* circumstances. What could be a greater proof of how little he was to be depended on, than the manner in which he had neglected her for the last two or three years? She, whom he had vowed to love, and whom, he now declared, he had never ceased to love—he had left her to struggle with her poverty and her loneliness, unsupported and unconsolated.

Money he had none, neither had she—for he was the son of a poor clergyman, who was starving himself, to keep his son at Oxford till he could take orders; and she was the daughter of a general officer, whose income had died with him; and who, having lived

expensively, had little to leave for the support of his wife and child, but the poor pension that Government afforded. Mrs. Dering had soon sunk under a loss and a reverse, which her already impaired health unfitted her to encounter; and Emily, educated in affluence and bred in elegance, was left, at seventeen, to struggle with the cold world alone, and to make the sad experiment, on how little life and a respectable appearance could be supported. Their mutual poverty had prevented the young couple marrying in the first bloom of their attachment; but for some time after her mother's death, Emily had been cheered and supported through her afflictions, by Gerald's attention and kindness. But, as time advanced, his attentions slackened; his visits to Bath became rare and short; and the correspondence, which had, at first, been regular and frequent, had gradually declined, till it had died away altogether, and Emily knew nothing of Gerald's movements

but what she occasionally gathered from his father.

In the meantime, the reduction of her circumstances had kept pace with that of her consolations. The small sum that remained to her after her mother's death was daily becoming less, and the pension she received was altogether inadequate to her support. Sorrows and difficulties were thickening around her. Gerald's long neglect not only appeared sufficient to release her from her engagement, but seemed to justify her in the belief that she would be doing him a service in releasing him from his ; and his father, who looked upon their union as hopeless, and considered their attachment a mutual misfortune, encouraged her in these views of the case. Under these circumstances, she had accepted Mr. Weston ; and, had not Gerald unfortunately learnt her intentions, and found his love so far revived, by the apprehension of losing her, that he started instantly from

London to enforce his own long-neglected claims, a few weeks more would have seen her the wife of a worthy, wealthy man, of a certain age, whose kindness would have rendered her duties easy, and whose reasonable expectations would have been satisfied with such a degree of affection as that kindness would have ensured. But now all was undone again, and Emily was once more on the wide world; for, though Gerald had convinced her that he could not part with her without pain, and although he had revived in her breast the fire that neglect had chilled, and so rendered her union with Mr. Weston impossible, he had not convinced her that his character was changed, and he had not shown her any way out of the difficulties that encompassed them. As for Mr. Pilrig's story, it might not be true; besides, if it were, Mr. Livingstone might alter his intentions and will ten times before he died; and, even in the most favourable view of the case,



the prospect of great wealth hereafter could be of no use to them now ; and five hundred pounds in hand would have been worth a million in prospective.

To give him his due, these thoughts weighed heavily on Gerald's mind, too, as he walked that night to his father's house ; and he felt keenly the justice of Emily's reproach, " How selfish and cruel it was of him to come ! " But the mischief was done, and the question that remained was, how was the injury he had done her to be compensated. There was but one way that he could see, and that was to marry her immediately, and persuade his father to let her live at the vicarage, until he had taken orders, and obtained some means of supporting her himself ; and this, with a heavy heart, when he had heard the story, Mr. Gage acceded to. But, when the plan was proposed to Emily, although she consented to accept the shelter offered her, she recoiled from the idea of an

immediate union. She felt that there would be a want of delicacy towards Mr. Weston in so abruptly transferring the hand to another, which she had, within so short a period, promised to him; and she insisted on a delay of six months; which interval was to be employed by Gerald in completing his studies, and by his father in the most strenuous endeavours to obtain some provision for his future subsistence.

## CHAPTER IV.

MR. LIVINGSTONE and Mr. Gage had been schoolfellows at Winchester, and fellow-collegians at Oxford. They were both the sons of poor clergymen, and both designed for the Church ; but just at the moment that, with anxious hearts and throbbing heads, they were preparing for their examination, Obi, as he was commonly called by his familiars, received an invitation to India, from a connexion who was prosperously settled there ; and, bidding adieu to theology and the Greek

Lexicon, he started upon a new and more hopeful career. From that period, although they had vowed eternal friendship several hundred times, Mr. Gage heard no more of his chum, till he happened, many years afterwards, to read in the newspaper that his old friend had returned from India, the possessor of enormous wealth. But for the last clause of the paragraph, he would have made some attempt to renew the acquaintance; but he was himself so very poor, that the "enormous wealth" deterred him; and it was by accident only that Mr. Livingstone's recollection of his fellow-student was revived. He chanced to see a card lying on the table, one day, when he called at his solicitor's, inscribed with the words *Gerald Gage*. The name struck him, and, on inquiry, he learnt that the owner of it was the son of his former friend. No intimation of this discovery, however, reached the obscure vicarage of N——, and the extraordinary conse-

quences that resulted from it would have remained an unsuspected and impenetrable secret, but for the strange indiscretion of Mr. Pilrig. As Obi had always shown a tendency to eccentricity, old Mr. Gage, to whom the affair was communicated by his son, had no great difficulty in believing that he had made such a will; but the probability that he might alter it, and the remoteness of any advantage to be expected, if he did not, induced him to urge his son to banish the subject as much as possible from his mind, and Gerald promised that he would return to Oxford, and finish his studies, as steadily as if no such contingency awaited him; and whilst we leave him to fulfil these laudable intentions, we will introduce our readers to Mr. Livingstone's drawing-room, in Portland Place; where, seated in an easy chair, and surrounded by every appliance of comfort and luxury, the respected possessor of so much wealth was solacing himself alternately with

his hookah, and a pile of Indian newspapers that lay beside him.

He wore a brown wig, and a brown coat, and shorts of the same colour. His age might be sixty-five, but there was nothing either in the appearance of his face or of his well-formed legs, which were clothed in white-ribbed cotton stockings, that would have been very encouraging to a legatee. The expression of his countenance was not ill-tempered; on the contrary, there was a spice of fun and humour about the nose, and in the small twinkling eyes; but there was something around the mouth, and the closing of the lips, that denoted a degree of firmness amounting to obstinacy.

On the opposite side of the fireplace, attired, although it was morning, in a small blue gauze turban, and a green silk dress, with her collar all awry, and a locket and chain, that were intended to be in front, hanging over her left shoulder, sat Miss Sally

Nichols, a middle-aged lady, to whom nature had never been very kind in the matter of personal attractions, and whose incongruous taste in dress, combined with a total incapacity for putting on her wig, or anything else she wore, straight, gave her a comical air that was very apt to excite laughter in those who were not accustomed to her appearance. She was a distant and poor relation of Mr. Livingstone's, and, when young, had gone out to India to look for a husband, but, not succeeding in the speculation, had ever since resided with him in the capacities of house-keeper, companion, nurse and interpreter; for the old gentleman was very deaf, and, for more reasons than one, preferred having an interpreter of his own to applying to people to repeat what they had said. One of these was that he detested bawling; whilst Nicky, as he called her, knew the exact tone that was most agreeable to his auditory nerves; and another, that he, by this means, avoided

the conversations he had no desire to be troubled with, and only asked her to repeat when his curiosity prompted the inquiry. But the consequence of this arrangement was, that he heard only through Nicky's ears, and understood only through her understanding, except on those rare occasions, when he chose to hear and understand for himself, which, perhaps, he had not quite so much difficulty in doing as he pretended to.

Now Nicky's ears were much like those of other people, but her understanding was different; and, although she was the most honest creature in the world, and had every intention of reporting correctly what she had heard, yet the discourse and propositions she conveyed to Mr. Livingstone, had not unfrequently undergone so strange a transmutation in their passage through her mind, that they could never have been recognised by their owners; whilst he, who was satisfied of her truth, never doubted the correct-



ness of her reports, and only attributed the extravagant assertions and unaccountable nonsense that often reached him, to the daily increasing folly of the world ; a persuasion, by the way, in which he delighted, and which was a principal element in his happiness, as it was at once the source of his mirth, the maintenance of his self-complacency, and the justification of the obstinacy, incredulity and aversion, with which he received the advances of all his connexions.

“ Nicky,” said the old gentleman, “ what’s o’clock ?”

“ Twelve, sir,” answered Nicky, glancing at the or-molu clock on the mantel-piece.

“ And that fellow not here yet, although I consented to see his ugly face at half-past eleven. What can he have to say to me ?”

“ I can’t think—I’m sure,” said Nicky.

“ I’ll answer for that, Nicky,” said Mr. Livingstone, chuckling ; “ you never could in your life.”

"Isn't it natural he should wish to see his uncle?" said Nicky, "even if it were nothing else."

"Uncle!" said Mr. Livingstone; "pshaw! it *must* be money he wants."

"But he said it wasn't," objected Nicky. "He said he had something of importance to communicate."

"I don't believe him," said Mr. Livingstone. "How should a fellow like that know anything of importance? Who'd tell it him? Who'd trust him?"

"But he may have found it out," said Nicky.

"Then it won't be true," said Mr. Livingstone. "However, I shan't believe it, at any rate. I never do believe anybody, especially him."

"No, you never do," answered Nicky, in a tone of quiet assent; adding presently: "There's a knock at the door now; I dare say that's him."

"Come and sit over here," said Mr. Livingstone, "and leave your chair for him ; and then you can tell me what he says. I can't bear the sound of his voice."

Nicky did as she was bid ; and, in a minute afterwards, the door opened, and the black footman announced Mr. Graves Livingstone, who, advancing eagerly across the room, with his hand extended, "hoped he saw his dear uncle quite well."

Instead of returning the salutation, Mr Livingstone pointed to the opposite chair ; whilst his nose curled, and his eyes twinkled, and his lips closed on one another as firmly as if they intended to remain hermetically sealed for the rest of his life. But the visitor was not a man easily daunted ; so, before he sat down, he rubbed his hands over the fire, and observed that it was very cold, and he believed the glass was lower on that morning than it had been all the winter.

Mr. Livingstone did not know what he

said, nor did he care to inquire; and the remarks would have fallen to the ground had not Nicky observed that she supposed that was the reason she had found a lump of ice in her water-jug in the morning.

"What does he want, Nicky?" said Mr. Livingstone.

"I have something," said Mr. Graves, rising from the chair into which he had just dropped, and approaching his uncle, "of the greatest importance to communicate—something for your ear alone, uncle."

"Tell it to Nicky," said the old gentleman.

"I believe, sir, it would be better that you should hear me yourself," said the nephew.

"I won't," said Mr. Livingstone, taking up his newspaper.

"Very well, sir," said the nephew, evidently disappointed and annoyed; "it's a matter that concerns you, not me. I only wish to put you on your guard against a person that betrays your confidence."

"I am on my guard, and I never give my confidence to anybody," said Mr. Livingstone; "so nobody can betray it."

"Excuse me," said the nephew, "there's a certain lawyer called Pilrig —"

"What of him?" said Mr. Livingstone, surprised out of his determination not to listen.

"He babbles about your affairs," continued the nephew,—"boasts of being your confidential agent —"

"The devil he does!" exclaimed Obiah.

"And goes about telling people that you have made a will."

"Did he tell you so?" inquired Mr. Livingstone.

"He did," answered Mr. Graves; "and in the presence of your intended heir, too."

"Then I've no doubt you asked him the question. And pray, did he tell you what I'd left you?"

"No, sir," said the nephew; "nor did I

ask him. He said you had left everything to a stranger of the name of Gage; and, only imagine, sir, Gage was in the coach himself at the time."

"And that's your business here, is it?" asked the uncle.

"It is," replied Mr. Graves. "I thought it my duty to inform you."

"You needn't have troubled yourself," said Mr. Livingstone, resuming his paper, with an air of indifference. "What a fool says is of no consequence; nobody'll believe him; and if they do, it's of no consequence still."

"Why, sir, few people like their private intentions to be made known to the world," said Mr. Graves.

"Nobody's acquainted with my private intentions," said Mr. Livingstone, nodding significantly, "therefore, there's no danger of their being made known to the world. And now I want to read my paper, so if you've anything more to say, tell it to Nicky."

"My uncle seems determined not to believe anything against this Mr. Pilrig," said Graves, in a low voice, as he took up his hat and rose to depart; "but I beg you'll explain to him that my only motive for coming was to prevent mischief; for, a person that talks of one thing, may talk of another, and there's no telling what may come of it."

"Very true," said Nicky. "I'll tell him so."

"You know I can have no motive for interfering but interest for him. If it wasn't for that, the man might talk to all eternity for me; but I couldn't bear to hear my uncle's private intentions blabbed in that manner, in a stage-coach. I was quite shocked. You'll be sure and make him understand this."

"I will," said Nicky; "depend upon it."

"What does he say?" inquired Mr. Livingstone, as soon as his nephew had left the room.

"He says," answered Nicky, "that he

wouldn't interfere if it wasn't for his interest ; but that he wishes to prevent mischief ; and that when he heard of your intentions in the stage-coach, he was quite shocked."

"I warrant him," said Mr. Livingstone ; "and I've no doubt he has been getting round that fool of a lawyer, and sucked this out of him. Write to Pilrig for his bill ; and tell John, if he calls, to say I'm not at home."

That night, before he went to bed, Mr. Livingstone tore up the will that Mr. Pilrig had made, and threw the fragments into the fire.



## CHAPTER V.

"WHAT an idle dog you're grown, Gage," said young Marmaduke Vane, on entering Gerald's room one morning, and finding him, as was usual of late, sitting in his dressing-gown and slippers, with his knees crossed, and smoking a cigar. On the table before him lay a hunting-whip, and a shot-belt, a pair of foils, and a boxing-glove. There were, also, materials for writing, and a sheet of paper, with the beginning of a letter, which had proceeded as far as, "My

dear Emily, I am really ashamed of my long si——,” below which words appeared the sketch of a beautiful setter, called Rover, the original of which portrait was lying at the young man’s feet. The walls of the room were hung with shooting and hunting-coats, guns and pistols ; interspersed with engravings, chiefly of horses celebrated on the turf, or boxers eminent in the ring ; and on the mantel-piece lay a variety of cigar-cases, mingled with tubes of various sizes and shapes—short and long, crooked and straight—intended for the purpose of smoking ; together with a dice-box, and sundry packs of cards. “How do you expect to get through your examination, I should like to know? Why, I suspect you’ve forgotten what the inside of a book is made of!”

“Pretty nearly,” said Gerald, in a desponding tone. “Is that to-day’s paper you have in your hand? Just let me look at it!”

"What do you think Willoughby said last night?" said Vane, giving him the journal; "he said, 'that though you were always borrowing everybody's paper, you never read anything but the Births, Deaths, and Marriages.'"

"He does me too much honour," said Gerald; "I never read even so much!"

"What *do* you read, then?" said Vane, looking at him with unaffected curiosity.

"The Deaths!" replied Gerald.

"Oh, I have it!" said Vane; "I have it! You're expecting a legacy! I hope it's a plumper!"

"A few hundred thousand pounds," answered Gerald.

"The deuce!" cried Vane. "You don't say so! What a lucky dog you are!"

"I should be, if I'd got it," answered Gerald; "but 'there's many a slip,' you know."

"What, ar'n't you sure of it?" asked Vane.

"Oh, yes, quite sure!" replied Gerald, who, seeing how he was rising in importance, had not resolution to say he was not; "sure enough, if I live; but one may die, you know."

"Oh, hang dying!" said Vane. "Nobody dies that's got a hundred thousand pounds!"

"That's exactly what I complain of," said Gerald.

"Oh, but I mean when one's young. He's an old fellow, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes!" said Gerald, "and has been many years in India. That *ought* to shake a man's constitution."

"Oh, he'll die!" said Vane, "never fear; he'll pop off some morning when you're not thinking of it."

"He'll find it difficult to do that, I fancy," replied Gerald, with a half smile.

"Then, I suppose, the truth is, you don't mean to take orders," continued Vane.

"Why, I don't much think I shall," answered Gerald. "I always had an inclination for the army; and if I could get a commission, I believe I had better indulge my fancy than tie myself to a profession I don't like."

"Get somebody to recommend you at the Horse Guards, and purchase a commission," said Vane.

"I have no money," replied Gerald. "I may be the master of a million in six months' time; but at present I haven't a rap."

"Won't the old fellow come down?" asked Vane.

"I daren't ask him," answered Gerald. "He's eccentric, and such a request might ruin me."

"Whew!" said Vane, "that's the way

with them all. They're the devil to deal with, those old fellows. But why don't you try the Jews?"

"I've no means of convincing them of the reality of my expectations," answered Gerald. "They're afraid of being done; and my hands are so tied, that I daren't take any step to satisfy them."

"Is there nobody you can get to answer for you?" said Vane.

"Nobody," replied Gerald; "the old fellow's been so close—stop, though," added he, "what if I could get the lawyer that made the will?"

"The very man!" cried Vane. "Huzza! Where does he live? What's his name?"

"I don't know where he lives!" answered Gerald, eluding the last question, "but I can easily find out. You think he'll do?"

"Think! Certain of it!" replied Vane. "Is it in London he lives?"

"Yes, that much I know," replied Gerald.

"Then come along with me!" said Vane; "I'm off to-night, and I'll drive you up in my tilbury. Besides, I know an honest fellow—honest for a Jew, I mean—that'll do your business for you capitally."

The remaining preliminaries were soon settled; and, at the appointed hour, the two young men started for London. As the name was not a common one, Gerald had little difficulty in discovering that Mr. Pilrig was to be found in Lincoln's Inn, and, accordingly, thither he bent his steps. The lawyer was busy at his desk, happily oblivious of his ill-starred journey to Bath, and his own imprudence, when he was "frighted from his propriety" by the announcement that Mr. Gerald Gage was in the next room, and begged to see him immediately. "Gerald Gage!" said he to the clerk who had

entered with the intelligence. "Did you say I was at home?"

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk. "The gentleman says he wishes to see you on particular business."

"Humph!" said Mr. Pilrig, with a sigh. "Show him in, Smith! What the deuce can he want with me?" thought he. "To tell him more about the will I suppose. He'll think he has me under his thumb, and that he can screw anything out of me he pleases. And how the plague can I help myself, if he chooses to use the power he's got?" And as these agreeable reflections passed rapidly through the lawyer's mind, he rose to receive the visitor, to whom he offered a chair, with an air of as much complaisance and welcome as he could assume on so short a notice.

"I dare say, Mr. Pilrig," said Gerald, "that I need not remind you of our meeting



in the Bath coach last December; nor of the conversation that passed on that occasion."

"I remember the circumstance you allude to perfectly, sir," said Mr. Pilrig, "and allow me to add that it is not without great pain that I remember it. It was the first time that I was ever guilty of such an indiscretion, and I hope you will believe me, when I assure you that it will be the last."

"Did you succeed in finding our fellow traveller?" inquired Gerald.

"No, sir," replied Pilrig, "I made every inquiry, but without success. However, I trust he has made no ill use of my imprudent disclosure. I have no reason to think that he has."

"Then you have heard nothing from Mr. Livingstone on the subject?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Not very lately," replied the lawyer: "I only go, of course, when he sends for me."

"What sort of a man is he?" inquired Gerald.

"A good man enough, I believe," replied Mr. Pilrig, "but eccentric, obstinate, suspicious, and disliking everybody that he thinks has a design upon his property, or entertains hopes of succeeding to it—not from avarice, but rather from an ill opinion and contempt for human nature."

"But I meant," said Gerald, *almost* blushing, "what sort of a man is he in person, age, health?"

"Oh," replied Pilrig, "I should think he's upwards of seventy; and as for his health, you know, he was a long while in India, and I needn't observe how that tells against a man when he comes to be in years; for," thought the cunning lawyer,

"the nearer I represent the prize the more cautious he'll probably be, for fear of losing it."

"Well, then," said Gerald, "altogether, I suppose you consider me pretty secure of stepping into this property before many years are over my head?"

"I do, sir," said Mr. Pilrig; "I've no doubt of it, provided you keep your own counsel, and that he never suspects you know anything of the business: perhaps before many months."

"He shall never have any reason to suspect it from me, you may rely on it," said Gerald. "But you see, Mr. Pilrig, in the meantime, whilst the corn grows, the steed starves. I want money, and you must help me to get a little."

"I, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Pilrig, with a look of alarm. "Why, if I were but to hint such a thing to Mr. Livingstone, the business would be all up. He'd throw his will into

the fire, and, most likely, kick me out of the house into the bargain."

"I'm well aware of that," replied Gerald; "and I don't want you to hint it to Mr. Livingstone. What I want you to do is, to stand godfather to me. You must promise and vow three things in my name: first, that I am the heir to a great estate; secondly, that the present incumbent is stricken in years, and has gout and asthma, with a dropsical diathesis; and, thirdly, that I am a right honest fellow, who will pay my debts handsomely as soon as I come into my property."

"You're jesting, I'm sure, sir," said Mr. Pilrig. "You wouldn't ask me to do such a thing!"

"I was never more serious in my life," replied Gerald: "and I think I've every right to ask you to do such a thing. You say, yourself, that you have no doubt I shall inherit the property in a few years at furthest;

and where's the harm of helping me to a little cash in the meantime, when a few words can do it?"

"I'm sure, sir, if I had any money to spare that could be of any use to you," said Mr. Pilrig, "I should be most happy ; but, setting every other consideration aside, to go and put another person in possession of such a secret—surely, you must see it's the height of imprudence!"

"Not at all," replied Gerald. "As soon as that other person has lent me money, it will be as much his interest as it is ours to keep the secret. Besides, you need'nt say what property it is that I expect. You've only to satisfy the person in question that my prospects are what I represent them."

"But you'll get no money under such circumstances, sir," objected Mr. Pilrig, "except upon enormous interest."

"That may be," replied Gerald. "I dare say the interest will be enormous ; but it isn't

much I want—only a few hundred pounds to purchase a commission, and fit me out. A thousand would do it abundantly.”

“A thousand pounds, sir!” said Pilrig. “It’s easy to talk of a thousand pounds; but a thousand pounds isn’t so easily got.”

“But, I tell you I *can* get it,” replied Gerald, “if you’ll only do what I require.”

“I couldn’t—indeed I couldn’t, sir,” said Pilrig.

“Nonsense! Mr. Pilrig,” exclaimed Gerald, contemptuously. “What’s the use of affecting such scruples after what has passed? Is there anything worse in helping me to a little cash for an honourable purpose, which you know I shall pay, than in betraying your client’s private affairs to a stranger in a stage-coach? I should like to know, if the two peccadilloes were placed in a balance, which would weigh the heaviest?”

“You’re hard upon me, sir,” said Pilrig. “But you must remember that my unfor-

fortunate disclosure was unpremeditated—a mere *lapsus linguæ*, while this would be a deliberate act.”

“That makes no difference in the result,” observed Gerald. “Your *lapsus linguæ*, as you are pleased to call it, might have been, and may still be, as injurious to me as if you had premeditated the thing for a twelvemonth. You’ve risked doing me a great mischief, and you are bound in justice to make me some compensation. Besides, I’m desperate; money I must have; and, in a word, if you won’t assist me, I’ll go to Mr. Livingstone myself, and explain my situation. It’s true, I dare say he’ll alter his will if I do; but he can hardly refuse a thousand pounds to a man for whom he intended a million, and the son of his old friend, too; and, situated as I am, the thousand is almost as much an object of desire now, as the million at an indefinite period.”

“Will you give me till to-morrow morning

to think of it?" said Pilrig, seeing the determination of the other to carry his point.

"Very well!" said Gerald; "I will if you desire it, though the delay is useless, seeing the thing must be done. I will be with you, then, at ten, to-morrow; and I'll bring the man that's to lend the money with me."

"No, sir," said Pilrig; "don't do that. If you *must* have the money, I think I can get somebody to advance it at a cheaper rate than you can get it yourself. I'll consider of it between this and then."

"Now you talk reason, Mr. Pilrig," said Gerald. "Good-by, then, till to-morrow," and the unwelcome visitor departed.

"Yes," said the unlucky lawyer to himself, after maturely weighing the *pros* and *cons*—"yes, although if he shouldn't live to inherit the property, I shall never see my thousand pounds again, I believe it will be more prudent to lend it him myself, at a legal interest, and take his bond, than risk my



professional reputation by letting the secret go any further. Besides, I shall be laying him under an obligation ; and, if he gets the money, I may find my account in it hereafter."

So, when Gerald called on the following morning, after expatiating largely on the difficulty he should have in raising the sum on the one hand, and the dislike he had to see gentlemen cheated, as they invariably were by the money-lending craft, on the other—interspersing his discourse with hints of the interest he could not help feeling for a young gentleman so peculiarly situated—Mr. Pilrig consented to advance the required amount, and Gerald returned to his hotel with a thousand pounds in his pocket, to begin the world with.

## CHAPTER VI.

It is unnecessary to observe, that when a man, who never had a thousand shillings, finds himself possessed of a thousand pounds, he thinks the sum inexhaustible. So thought Gerald Gage. He felt that he carried in his pocket a key to all manner of pleasures, and the only question was, which he should explore first. It is true, the money was destined to purchase a commission and his outfit; but he considered that six or seven hundred pounds was enough for that, and

the rest he was at liberty to do as he liked with. But then there was Emily. The six months she had insisted on were already elapsed, and he was bound in honour to go and claim her hand; but what was a subaltern in a marching regiment to do with a wife? He loved her still—as selfish men love; and if he had been in any danger of losing her, he would probably have enforced his claim as energetically as he had done before. But he felt so sure of her, that his mind was sufficiently disengaged to see all the inconveniences that would arise from their union; more especially now, that he was resolved not to go into the Church. The humblest curate must have a home; and, however his poverty may be augmented by having a wife to support, his respectability is not diminished. The world feels that, in the manner of life he is destined to, he needs a companion; and an early marriage, if it cannot be approved, is rather pitied than

blamed. But a subaltern with nothing but his pay, places himself, and the woman he marries, in a situation that vibrates between the melancholy and the ridiculous. The red coat and the gold epaulets, and the miserable barrack-room that serves for parlour and bedroom, form an incongruous whole, that no man with the slightest reflection would choose to introduce his wife to.

Gerald had not much reflection, but he had a great deal of pride, which served equally well to enlighten him on this occasion. The obscure curate and the smart ensign were two different persons; and the one might have been proud of the wife that the other would be ashamed of. Not but that any man might have been proud of Emily's beauty and accomplishments; but what are beauty and accomplishments to a woman who is obliged to wash her own stockings? Gerald could not bear the thought of it. He was involuntarily begin-

ning to measure himself and form his ideas, according to what he expected to be hereafter, not according to what he was now ; and his college friends, as soon as they learned the good fortune that awaited him, helped him to cherish the delusion. He found himself hourly rising in importance. They declared he was the luckiest dog in the world, with his million of money in perspective ; and affirmed that no man need want cash, or anything that cash can purchase, with such a prospect before him. All this was very seducing to an impetuous, impatient, aspiring lad of one-and-twenty, who had, all his life, felt the *gêne* and mortification of being poorer than his companions, and had thirsted for pleasures that he could not afford. But tying himself to a wife was tying himself to poverty and obscurity. Prudence, as well as selfishness—and Gerald, like most men, was selfish—forbad it ; the misfortune was, that he had not thought of

all this before he prevented Emily's marriage with Mr. Weston. But the jealousy that had been aroused by hearing of her engagement had rendered him reckless of all consequences ; and the wound to his self-love had been so acute, that even Mr. Pilrig's grand secret fell coldly on his ears ; nor could his pre-occupied mind and eager passions stop to weigh its importance, until he had accomplished the object that absorbed him, and to which all the energies of his nature were at the moment directed. But, the marriage with Mr. Weston broken off, the jealousy appeased, the self-love and the vanity satisfied, a calm ensued, which afforded leisure for other reflections ; and then it was that the brilliant prospect opened to him began to play its part on his unstable mind. The dull curacy and the sober habits which he had always looked upon with distaste, now inspired him with disgust ; and, although he still loved Emily as much as he could love

any woman, where there was neither the excitement of pursuit nor the zest of uncertainty, he felt he did not love her well enough to bind himself, for an indefinite term, to a life of poverty and obscurity for her sake.

But how, without insulting her, was he to evade the arrangement that had been made for their union, now that the appointed period had arrived? It is true that the objections he had to urge were in the highest degree reasonable; but he felt, after all that had passed, that they ought to proceed from her, not from himself. In him, caution was coldness, and he feared that she would not fail to discern its true character; in her, it was the offspring of reflection—the fruit of a young mind, tutored and strengthened by adversity. But whilst he was debating whether to make some excuse for absenting himself from the vicarage till he could determine what to do, or whether to go down immediately and claim

the hand of his affianced bride, leaving it to her judgment to consent or decline as she thought proper, Fate took the affair into her own hands. His father, returning one dark night from visiting the death-bed of one of his parishioners, rode into an old marl-pit, where he was found lying beside his horse on the following morning. He was carried home in a state of insensibility, and a letter was despatched to his son, who arrived just time enough to receive his last breath and the hand of Emily, which the dying parent placed in his, with an earnest injunction to take her to his heart, and make her as happy as she deserved to be.

The death of his father affected Gerald's feelings, softened his heart, and steadied his character for a time; and Emily's attractions regained their influence over his fluctuating mind. His dreams of ambition and visions of splendour grew dim, and faded before the delights of a pure and innocent love. The



image of the despised curacy, and the pleasures of a life of retirement and virtue, took the place of his aspiring hopes and restless desires, and he eagerly entreated her to comply with his father's last wishes, and become his wife.

But, young as she was, Emily's sad experience had taught her caution. She knew how unfitted Gerald was to encounter poverty, and well understood how much worse poverty was with a family than without it; so she entreated him to wait till he was in some situation that should at least secure them from want. Whereupon, as gentlemen are apt to do in such cases, he accused her of want of affection; declaring that true love made no such calculations, and that poverty together would be much more endurable than poverty apart. But she was firm in what she knew to be right, and would not be shaken. So he wrote to a former pupil of his father, to solicit the patronage that had been promised

to the old man ; resolving to return to Oxford next term, read hard, make up for lost time, and take orders. And, in the meanwhile, they both took up their abode with an aunt of his, a single woman, with a very small income, which she eked out by letting part of the house she resided in.

All the money the young people had between them was Gerald's one thousand pounds, which, indeed, appeared to him inexhaustible ; but, as Emily thought differently, although she did not refuse, in some measure, to share it with him, she insisted on helping herself with her needle, as she had done before.

For a few weeks, Gerald read ; and the novelty of living under the roof with Emily supported him through the tameness of existence ; but as time crept on, *ennui* crept in, and it was impossible not to observe that he was becoming depressed and restless. Nothing could be more natural. Although Gerald could have studied for an immediate

object, he did not love study for its own sake. He wanted a powerful incentive to keep him to it, and the remote prospect of the curacy was not strong enough for the purpose. Then, though he loved Emily, the love grew cool with security ; there were no doubts, fears, nor jealousies, to stir the flame, and keep it bright. He began to yawn a great deal, stretch out his legs as if he did not know what to do with them, turn over the leaves of his books without reading them, and look out of the window into the dull back street, where there was nothing to see. Emily worked on the while, thinking how fortunate it was she had kept her resolution, and bade him walk out more, and see some recreation ; so, in compliance with this recommendation, he one night went to the theatre, and there the first persons he saw were his friends Willoughby and Vane ; the former of whom introduced him to his sister, Madame de

Violane, a very lovely woman, married to a Frenchman.

A few words, whispered by Willoughby to his sister and her husband, immediately after the introduction, caused the lady to turn upon him, with a look of awakened interest, a pair of the finest dark eyes he had ever seen ; whilst the foreigner, who had already acknowledged the introduction by the requisite number of bows, involuntarily added a supernumerary one, in compliment to the hint he had received ; and Gerald felt that he was enjoying a foretaste of his fortune—a first instalment of the homage which the reputation of great wealth is sure to command.

“ Where are you staying ? ” said Vane ;  
“ we’re at the York.”

“ I’m visiting a sick friend a little way out of town,” replied Gerald, “ or else I’d ask you to call on me. How long are you going to stay ? ”

“A few days only,” said Willoughby. “We’ve been making a tour, to show the Marquis a little of the country. Our next move is to London, and then to Paris. But you must come and see us; come to breakfast to-morrow at eleven.”

Gerald promised that he would, and Madame de Violane’s beautiful eyes expressed her satisfaction at the arrangement.

It is singular, and not much to the credit of human nature, that we are more gratified by the homage paid to our wealth than to our merits. Gerald was an extremely handsome young man; but, as he had not a confirmed air of fashion, Madame de Violane’s first glance had been one of utter indifference. He saw it; he saw the change that ensued, and comprehended it, and yet he was won by a compliment so little flattering; and felt more proud and pleased when she selected his arm to lean on when leaving the theatre, than if the preference had been given to his

personal qualities, instead of to a fortune which he not only did not possess, but which he never might possess; and which, even supposing it his, he had attained without effort, and without desert. But mankind and womankind are so fond of being admired for what they are not, that very few are content to take credit for what they are.

Madame de Violane shook hands as cordially with Gerald, when he handed her into her carriage, as if she had known him a dozen years; whilst the Frenchman, as he stepped in after her, made several deferential bows, which intelligibly announced his undisguised respect for wealth; after which, Gerald walked home to his obscure lodging in a state of confusion and excitement that would have made it difficult to analyze his own feelings, if he had tried. His cheeks were flushed, and his eye was animated by pleasure, and his heart was big with the triumph of gratified pride; and yet there was

a weight, a constriction, about the breast ; an undefined feeling of dissatisfaction and insecurity, and apprehension for the future ; so that, when he accosted Emily, who was sitting up for him, she was puzzled to interpret the mixed expression of his countenance. His manner was gay and excited, his complexion was heightened, and his eyes were bright and triumphant ; but there was an alloy about the mouth—the smiles were not free, and frank, and joyous ; some unseen, unknown, almost unfelt, care sat there ; a portent, a shadow, that came unsummoned, and would not be exorcised, and that made such strange discordance with the lustrous brow, that Emily's first words were, " Where have you been, Gerald ? What has happened ? "

" Nothing," answered he, gaily, " except that I have met some friends—some old college chums."

"Is that all?" said she.

"All, except that I am going to breakfast with them to-morrow at eleven," said he.

"Are they staying in Bath?" asked Emily.

"Only for a few days," replied Gerald. "There's Willoughby, and Vane, and a sister of Willoughby's that's married to a Frenchman. I never can understand how English women can marry Frenchmen."

"Nor I," replied Emily. "Is she pretty?"

"Yes, she is," answered Gerald: "she has beautiful dark eyes."

"And what sort of man is he?"

"Oh! he's not ill-looking; he's well enough for a Frenchman," replied Gerald.

"He's a Marquis, too."

"And are they rich?" asked Emily.

"That I don't know," answered Gerald. "She was beautifully dressed; but I don't think she could have had any fortune; for



I've heard Willoughby say that everything went to the eldest son, who will be a Baronet, and that the rest of them had nothing but their name to get on with."

"And where did you see them?" inquired Emily.

"At the theatre, where I looked in for an hour," answered Gerald. "They happened to be in the very box I was put into."

"Oh, how I should have liked to be with you !" exclaimed Emily.

"What for ?" asked Gerald.

"Why, to have seen the play, to be sure," answered she. "It's so long since I saw a play ! What was it ?"

"The play ? I'm sure I don't know," replied he. "We were talking all the time ; I never attended to it."

"Well, then, I'm glad I wasn't of the party," answered Emily. "I should have been out of patience. But don't you think we might go some night to the pit ? It

wouldn't cost much, and it would be such a treat to me ! I've never seen a play since my dear father died."

"Oh, yes, we can go, certainly," answered Gerald, rather coldly ; "but we had better wait till these people are away. It would be awkward if they saw us."

"Then we'll look out for a nice play," said Emily "and have a delightful evening, as soon as your fine friends are gone. We shall not have much gaiety for the rest of our lives, I dare say ; so we may venture to indulge for once."

"Why," asked Gerald, "why are we not to have much gaiety for the rest of our lives ?"

"Why, setting aside that we shall not be able to afford it," answered Emily, "you know we shall probably be *relégués* to the end of the world, when you get your curacy —far out of the atmosphere of theatres, and all such temptations !"

The lustre of Gerald's brow, which had been gradually fading, vanished. . "The curacy!" said he; "I'm sure I'm not made for it, nor it for me. There's no use in trying to force one's inclinations into a channel nature never designed them for. I'm sure the thing will never do; and it's better not to enter on it, than to thrust oneself into a situation, only to show one's unfitness for it."

"But, what other resource have we?" asked Emily, surprised at a declaration, apparently so sudden; "and what has altered your intentions?"

"Reflection, and the knowledge of my own character," replied Gerald. "I never did like the profession, and I like it less and less the more I think of it. As for what we're to do, I'm sure I can't tell. I've a mind to go to London, and try if I can't get some sort of situation!"

"But we've no interest, Gerald," objected

Emily. "We've no friends to help us to a situation."

"I don't know that," answered Gerald. "Willoughby's father's in Parliament, and Vane's uncle is Secretary-at-War. They're both devilish civil to me, because they expect some day I shall be richer than any of them ; and I don't think they'd be sorry to have an opportunity of laying me under an obligation. Vane told me, some time ago, that, if I liked to go into the army, he'd speak to his uncle about me,"

"But the army 'll never do for us, Gerald, without money," said Emily.

"What a thing poverty is !" exclaimed Gerald, with sudden bitterness. "What a thing it is to be a gentleman, and not be able to live like other people. Here are we, pent up in this little dirty hole of a lodging, that I shall be obliged to sneak into and sneak out of, for fear any of these people should see me. I told them I was living

out of town, to prevent their offering to call on me."

A vast proportion of young women would have been tempted to weep at this rending of the veil ; and indeed, there was cause enough ; for certain it is, that like the old story of the egg upon the wall, no human power could ever repair the damage, or replace the young couple exactly where they were before this outbreak. The charm was broken for ever. They had eaten of the tree of knowledge, and Gerald saw that he was living in a mean lodging, and he was ashamed ; and Emily saw that she had no longer power to make the lodging appear a palace to her lover, which, whilst he was happy, had appeared a paradise to her, and she felt that they were cast out of Eden.

But she had been schooled in adversity. She knew that this was no occasion for expostulation and tears ; so she shed none. Her heart swelled and her cheeks were for a

moment suffused, but she waited to speak till the passion had passed away ; and then looking up from her work, with a sweet loving smile, she said, " This is merely a little fever, dear Gerald, that you have caught by sitting near your fine friends. They've infected you with the love of grandeur. It's very natural. I dare say I should be just the same if I had been with you. But it will go off again. Fortunately, one's happiness does not depend on such matters, as I'm sure we've both felt for the last two months ; and although one may occasionally have little fits of this sort, they don't last—we soon cease to pine for things that are beyond our reach. Haven't you always found it so ?"

" I don't know," said Gerald, with less irritation than he had spoken before—for Emily's judicious forbearance had sprinkled cool patience on his passion : " I'm sure I have always pined to be rich, which is a

desire as likely to be gratified as a child's that cries for the moon—unless, indeed, that old fellow would cut. I really think poverty's more stinging when one has such a thing as that in prospect, than if one had no hopes of ever being better off. One would make up one's mind to it then ; but the possibility of such a change keeps one in a constant state of restlessness. I wish to my soul I had the fortune, or that I'd never heard of it!"

"I wish you had not, with all my heart," said Emily. "But as that is past wishing for, believe me the next best thing you can do is to forget it, and endeavour to act as if you never had."

But, alas ! Gerald could not forget it. The memory that had slept for a time, rocked by Love's zephyrs ; the passions, that had been fanned into forgetfulness by his balmy wings ; the pride, the impetuosity, the ambition, that had been soothed into still-

ness by his soft-toned melodies—were awake and abroad again. The last two months seemed a tame dream ; the small lodging and the dull street became insupportable ; the japanned tea-board and the scanty tablecloth disgustingly mean ; and even Emily's pink gingham gown, in which he had often thought she looked so pretty, seemed only fit for her maid. But what was to be done ? The commission, even had it been attainable, would not mend the matter ; and the curacy, which *was* attainable, seemed, if possible, less desirable. The former, certainly, if he remained single, might have been a resource ; and, as the thought struck him, the profane wish crossed him that he had not engaged himself. What was he to do with his few hundred pounds, and a wife ? Where could he go ? How advance himself ? Poverty is a prison ; it shuts a man in, he can neither move to the right nor to the left for it—that is, where discontent and pride



dwell with it. Indomitable industry, or the strong energy of genius, may burst the bonds, and set the prisoner free, but Gerald had neither. He was not without ability, but he wanted purpose and perseverance to make use of it; besides, his thoughts were set upon the golden harvest that awaited him—the harvest which another had sown, and which he was to reap, he could not tell how soon; and all the ordinary methods of attaining wealth appeared to him slow, tedious, uncertain, and, in short, insufferable. Trade of any sort he could not condescend to; and studying for any profession was out of the question; nay, his mind was a great deal too unsettled to think of it; and yet Mr. Livingstone persisted in not dying.

Gerald thought he should like to see him, and felt a mind to go to London, if only for the purpose of ascertaining what symptoms of decay he could discover about him. Here was an idea—an object—a something to do;

and the fancy took possession of him more and more. In fine, he resolved to do it ; the advantages were many—movement, variety, the possibility of something happening—for he was in that state in which people are apt to think the sky will fall, or something not less miraculous occur, to relieve them from difficulties they cannot make up their minds to put their own shoulders to—and not least, was the advantage of getting away from Emily. Not that he had ceased to love her ; but she had no communion with his present thoughts and feelings, and was therefore no longer a companion to him : so he told her that he had determined to go to London to see if he could not get a situation, or something to do, that might support them till the old gentleman dropt off.

Emily sighed over the delusion and the weakness ; but Gerald's self-will and impetuosity were not things to be argued down

by common sense, and, like a wise woman, she submitted to what she knew she could not amend. Vane and Willoughby expressed great satisfaction at hearing he was going to London; and Madame de Violane offered him a seat in her carriage. So he went to London in a barouche, with four horses, seated beside one of the most beautiful and fashionable women of the last season. It seemed a foretaste of the joys that awaited him hereafter; and, forgetting the embarrassments that entangled him, he became joyous and agreeable. Madame de Violane pressed him to take up his residence at her house whilst he was in town, an invitation too pleasant, as well as too convenient, to be declined. Thus, he became her guest, and as she took care to whisper abroad that he was heir to an immense fortune, he had no reason to complain of the world's want of civility. He was suddenly initiated into all the pleasures of the fashionable life of

London, and found it thoroughly to his taste ; in short, his present position had but one fault, and that was, that it had no secure foundation—it was not built upon a rock, but upon a quicksand—and there was not a day that he did not feel it shaking beneath him. His money melted, too, with rather an unseemly rapidity ; for though he paid nothing for lodging or boarding, he was, nevertheless, led into expenses very disproportioned to his means. He could not dress worse than his associates ; nor dispense with a horse and groom ; nor decline paying his share of expensive parties to Richmond ; nor refuse to play at cards and billiards for high stakes—at least, he *thought* he could not, which, in its consequences, amounted to the same thing.

Thus sped away three months ; during which time he wrote repeatedly to Emily, to tell her that he hoped the friends he was amongst would do something for him ; but

this was not true, he had no such hope. Even if they had the means—and it is not always so easy to *do something* for people as the lookers for *something* believe ; but, even if they had the means, they were much too thoughtless, and too much occupied with their own daily amusements, to make any serious effort about the matter. Nor was their friendship for Gerald deep enough to make them concern themselves about his interests. It was a mere holiday liking, that answered all the purposes of gay fellowship, but would bear no wear and tear ; and he had sagacity enough to be quite aware of this. But what could he do ? This was the question he daily and nightly asked himself ; but, alas ! no answer came. In the meantime, Madame de Violane broke up her establishment, and returned to Paris, giving Gerald a warm invitation to accompany her. At first he refused, but the temptation was

too great, and, after some hesitation, he consented ; resolving, however, only to stay three weeks, and then positively to return to Bath, and try once more to read and prepare himself for orders.

Whilst these events were happening, Emily kept on her even way, practising the most rigid economy, and supporting herself, as far as she was able, by her needle ; though Gerald had left her fifty pounds, and in all his letters urged to apply to him if she wanted more. But she knew that he would have quite enough to do with his money, and she carefully avoided every expense that could tend to render the application necessary. Although she supposed that he believed what he asserted with respect to his expectations from his friends, she had herself little hope of their realization, and she acted as if no such promises had ever been made : most wisely—for a promise is like money ; it

should never be anticipated, never be spent beforehand, or be counted on till it is safe in hand. Notwithstanding all his faults, she loved Gerald dearly, and she believed that, in spite of them, he loved her too. He had shown it when he thought he was about to lose her; and, in the first blush of his great fortunes, it had superseded all other considerations. After this, could she doubt him, because his ambition and the impetuosity of his nature unfitted him for a life of dull obscurity? That this was so, was, doubtless, in their circumstances, a serious misfortune: but these are faults of character that do not cure affection. In Gerald they were inherent, and to quarrel with them was to quarrel with himself; she must take him for better and worse, or reject him altogether; and, being just twenty, and in love, it is easy to descry which counsel must prevail. So, she held fast to her faith, trusting that time

would modify, if not cure, the faults of youth, and that, when once convinced of the folly of relying on hopes that might never be realized, common-sense and necessity would combine to make him do something for himself.



## CHAPTER VII.

"LAUK!" cried Miss Spike, as she looked out of one of the windows of Meurice's Hotel, in the Rue St. Honoré into the court below, "there he is again, I declare!"

"Who?" said her mistress, half rising from the sofa, where, tired with her morning's sight-seeing, she had stretched herself for a little repose before dinner.

"The young gentleman that I was speaking of, that's to have the great fortin'," replied Spike.

"Where is he? which is he?" inquired Mrs. Graves, starting up suddenly and approaching the window.

"He's just come into the hotel," answered Spike. "Perhaps he's going to dine at the *table dot*."

"I wish I'd seen him," said Mrs. Graves. "What sort of looking man is he?"

"As handsome a young gentleman as you'd wish to see," answered Spike. "I don't know as I ever see a handsomer. He's got beautiful dark whiskers, and teeth as white as fish-bones."

"Where's Miss Graves?" inquired the lady. "Is she drest?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the lady's-maid; for, by "a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances," the *ci-devant* Jenny had been elevated into that distinguished position, from which she remorselessly inflicted upon other unfortunate Jennys the scorn she had herself formerly so much resented—"I have just

finished her. She's got on her blue muslin."

"Ah!" replied Mrs. Graves, "she looks much better in white. Go and tell her, Spike, that I wish her to wear white to-day." But the entrance of the young lady herself superseded the necessity of this embassy.

Miss Graves was evidently a young lady made up for sale; her waist was contracted to the smallest span; she was dressed in the height of the fashion; she held her head very high, and her gait was something between a wriggle and a twist, which arose partly from tight stays, and partly from the perpetual consciousness of herself and her figure, which she had been persuaded was very fine, and she believed every eye was fixed upon her when she moved. She was insipidly fair, with very light hair, and white eyelashes; her features were heavy, and her face destitute of expression; but on the credit

of this exceeding fairness she set up for a beauty, and her mother was satisfied that she was one. Of course, she was extremely accomplished, doing a little of everything, without having the slightest genius, taste, or feeling for anything.

"Rolinda," said Mrs. Graves, "I wish you had worn your white crape or your pink gros-de-Naples to-day, you look so much better in them than in this blue muslin."

"La, mamma!" replied Rolinda, "they are a great deal too good to wear at a *table-d'hôte*, where one never meets anybody worth looking at."

"Yes, my love, but you *may* meet somebody, you know. I wonder if there would be time to change your dress before dinner. What o'clock is it, Spike?"

"It just wants five minutes, ma'am," answered Spike.

"Oh, no, mamma," replied Rolinda, "it will make me so red. You know if I have

to dress in a hurry, I am sure to get flushed ; and then the dining-room is so hot, and there's such a fume from the dishes, that if I go down heated, I shall get crimson. It's all I can do to keep my complexion down there of a day, by drinking cold water and eating ice."

"Well, then, it's better not," replied Mrs. Graves ; "but it's provoking, too, that you should have just fixed on to-day to wear that nasty blue muslin."

"Why, mamma, I don't think I look bad in it," said the young lady, surveying herself in the glass, with some anxiety ; "do you, Spike?"

"Lauk, miss, no," answered Spike : "it's just your mamma's idear ; "I never see you look better, to my mind."

"Who is it, mamma?" inquired Rolinda, who had no difficulty in rightly interpreting her mother's anxiety.

"Oh, nobody particular," replied Mrs.

Graves, with assumed indifference. "Just go to my bed-room, Spike, and see if you can find my vinaigrette. (Exit Spike.) I'll tell you who it is, Rolinda: it is the young man Spike said she saw this morning; he that is to have your uncle Livingstone's fortune; he is just come into the hotel, and I have no doubt he's going to dine at the public table."

"Did you see him?" inquired Rolinda.

"No; I did not," replied Mrs. Graves; "it's a pity your papa's away, for he could have easily claimed acquaintance, and introduced us; but, however, we shall easily recognise him from Spike's description. He is tall and handsome, with dark whiskers and fine teeth."

"He can't guess that we've heard anything about his prospects, at any rate," observed Rolinda.

"Certainly not," answered the mother; "and so far, it is, perhaps, as well that your

papa is away to-day ; because, if you *should* be struck with each other, there can be no suspicion of any ulterior motives."

" I wonder if it is certain Mr. Livingstone will leave him his fortune !" said Rolinda.

" Your papa thinks there is no doubt of it, from what he has heard," answered Mrs. Graves ; " and, though I am the last person in the world to wish a child of mine to make a marriage of interest, I must say, that nobody has so good a right to this fortune as yourself. If your uncle wasn't a brute, he'd have left it to his own nephew, instead of squandering it all on a stranger ; and then it would have been yours, without being obliged to any husband at all."

Here Spike put in her head to say that the dinner-bell had done ringing ; and the ladies having taken a last glance at themselves in the mirror, they proceeded down stairs—Mrs. Graves giving her own cheeks a little rub by the way, in order to bring the blood

into them, having observed that she looked somewhat pale after her morning's fatigue.

The dinner-hour was always a dull time with Spike. The male servants, both of the house and of the lodgers, were engaged in waiting at table ; and, unless she was lucky enough to fall in with some stray English lady's-maid, who was as much abroad as herself, she had nothing in the world to kill the time, but looking out of the window, or trying on her mistress's things before the looking-glass. She was so entirely absorbed in this last occupation, on the day in question, that she had scarcely time to take Miss Graves's last new bonnet off her head, before the ladies entered the room, clearly in a state of less pleasing excitement than they had left it. Gerald *had* dined there, and had actually sat opposite to Rolinda ; but he had taken no notice of her whatever ; an insensibility which Mrs. Graves attributed wholly to the sinister influence of the blue muslin, and



Rolinda to his own stupidity; for she had remarked that he was extremely absent, and appeared much more engrossed with his own thoughts than with the company he was in.

She was quite right—and well he might be; for since he arrived in Paris, he had been initiated into some of the mysteries of the Palais Royal; and having persuaded himself, that by adhering strictly to a certain system, he might win a great deal of money, and could only lose very little, he, somehow or other, in the course of verifying the experiment, had contrived to lose pretty nearly all he had; and what step to take next he was quite at a loss to determine. Another cast of the die might certainly bring it all back again: should he try it, or should he forswear play for ever? But, even if he did, what was he to do? Which way could he turn himself? Here he was initiated into the most fashionable society of London and Paris, *fêted*, and caressed, and looked upon

as a millionaire in expectation, if not in actual possession ; and many even thought that he was in possession—so far had report diverged from the truth—and he had scarcely five pounds in his pocket ; nor did he know where to get more when that was gone. It would need more powerful charms than Rolinda's to charm a man out of the recollection of such an embarrassment.

The Graves family were not much better off ; and, as nothing is more irritating to the temper than continual disappointment, nor more depressing to the spirits, than the sickness of hope deferred ; and as the lives of the mother and daughter were passed in a constant succession of such vexations, no wonder that they vented their mortification on each other, and were constantly quarrelling. Theirs was certainly a more than commonly painful case of fortune hunting. Mr. Graves was Mr. Livingstone's nephew and heir-at-law. During the residence of the

former in India, he was known to be amassing a large fortune, and having been the victim of an early disappointment, he had the reputation of being a determined *célibataire*. The consequence was, that Mr. Graves looked upon the large fortune as his own, and the world in general being of the same opinion, he enjoyed, in anticipation, many of the advantages or disadvantages, as the case may be, of the persuasion. Tradesmen gave him credit; he procured access into much better, at least higher, society than he could otherwise have aspired to; and he married a woman of quality with a fortune of ten thousand pounds, and on this ten thousand pounds and the reputation of the great fortune that he was some day to inherit, he had, by one contrivance and another, managed to live luxuriantly ever since. It is true it had long been all spent, but that did not signify—he lived on it still; he was a wonderful manœuvrer, always talked very big, and never

remained more than nine months in one place.

When Mr. Livingstone landed at Portsmouth, on his arrival from India, he found Mr. Graves with outstretched arms on the beach, ready to embrace him. Had the latter been better acquainted with the man he had to deal with, he would have known that nothing could possibly be more injudicious than this proceeding. Naturally of a suspicious disposition, and aware that nobody in the world had sixpenny worth of disinterested regard for him, Mr. Livingstone had returned to England with a thorough antipathy to heirs expectant, and an inexorable resolution not to be bored with them, and accordingly the *empressement* of the nephew, which it was extremely difficult to suppress, was very soon requited by the thorough detestation of the uncle.

For a long time Mr. Graves neither could nor would believe in the alienation. He

insisted that it was only Mr. Livingstone's manner; and when he found the door shut against himself, he forced in his wife and daughter, who, by their injudicious efforts to win the old man's heart, completed the mischief; and it was not till he wormed out Mr. Pilrig's strange disclosure in the stage-coach, that he was actually convinced of the disappointment awaiting him. From that moment, the constant study of both himself and his wife had been to keep the world in ignorance of this fatal secret, and to get their daughter well married on the strength of her great expectations, before the truth was discovered. But with respect to the latter enterprise, they had hitherto been unsuccessful. When suitors came to close inquiries, they found the fortune was too much *en l'air* to satisfy their tender affections for the *beaux yeux* of the young lady's *cassette*—and one after another fell off, just as they were supposed to be coming to the point. And

yet matters were getting more and more urgent, resources were wearing out, creditors becoming pressing, and excuses growing stale. It was in this crisis of affairs that the ladies met Gerald at the *table-d'hôte*; and when, after a couple of days' absence, Mr. Graves returned, he was immediately informed of the *rencontre*.

"We must get acquainted with him, at all events," said he; "there is no telling what may come of it."

So Mr. Graves waylaid Gerald at one of his resorts in the Palais Royal, and found no difficulty in making his acquaintance. Indeed, the young man, who was at his wits' end for means to carry on the war, was too happy to find himself courted by a gentleman who, from his conversation in the coach, he felt satisfied must be a man of immense fortune. Not that he had recollected his features, till Mr. Graves reminded him of their former *rencontre*, and then they shook hands very

cordially; and Mr. Graves invited Gerald to dine with him at Meurice's.

Rolinda wore her pink gros-de-Naples, and her pale hair was teased into innumerable small ringlets, with about half-a-dozen hairs in each. Gerald thought he had never seen anything less attractive than the *ensemble*; but he wanted friends and upholders at the moment too much, to be otherwise than extremely gallant and *empresé*. His fine friends had left Paris for Italy, but the consumptive state of his funds had prevented his accompanying them, and the same difficulty kept him in Paris. He fancied it was easier to live there upon nothing than in England; and he felt a mixture of shame and remorse that made him dread the sight of Emily. He was fully sensible of his own folly and of her good sense, and ardently wished he had had resolution to act according to her counsels, though he felt himself just as far as ever from being able to do so, and

excused himself by the persuasion that it was now too late. Then, although he really loved her still, was fully sensible of what an admirable wife she would make him, and could not bear the thoughts of seeing her in the arms of another, he was so disgusted at the selfishness and cruelty that had induced him to break off her match with Mr. Weston, when he had no support to offer her himself, that he had for some time ceased even to write to her. "It's better that she should forget me," he said to himself; but he did not think she would, and if he had thought so, he would probably have written.

In the meantime, Mr. Graves invited him frequently to dinner, and initiated him into some gambling secrets that he found very useful; and, as they were both actuated by secret motives of interest, unsuspected by the other, they soon became great friends.



## CHAPTER VIII.

"HERE, Emily, look at this," said old Miss Gage, to her young inmate one day. "I saw this paper at Baxter's shop, and I asked them to lend it me; for I think there is something in it that would suit you. You were saying the other day that you wished you could get a situation as companion, and here is an advertisement for the very thing; and I am sure it must be something of a superior kind, for applications are to be made to Wright and Miller, and that is a first-rate London firm."

"I have heard Gerald speak of them," said Emily. "Charles Miller was one of his schoolfellows, and they were great friends."

"Yes," answered Miss Gage; "and his father and my brother were intimate all their lives. Hear what the advertisement says: 'Wanted, as companion to an elderly gentleman and lady, a young lady of education and respectability; she must be well-tempered and cheerful —' "

"I am sure I am not cheerful," interrupted Emily.

"Oh, but you are cheerful, naturally," answered Miss Gage; "though you are not so just now; and your spirits will return fast enough when you are out of your troubles."

"When will that be?" asked Emily, with a sigh.

"Never while you stay here, Emily, working your fingers to the bone for scarcely enough to keep body and soul together: but

if you were once easy in your circumstances, you'd soon recover your spirits."

"You speak as if circumstances were the only trouble I had, aunt," said Emily.

"Upon my word, I think they ought to be, my dear," answered Miss Gage. "I should be sorry to think you were fretting after a man who has left you alone to struggle with your difficulties for nearly a twelvemonth, whilst he is living in luxury and idleness; and who has not even written to you for some months."

"I may be at least allowed to grieve that Gerald should be capable of doing so," replied Emily, with a sigh.

"It is a very lamentable thing that he should, certainly," answered Miss Gage; "and, as he is my nephew, I have as much right to regret it as you can have; and so I do. But the contempt such conduct deserves ought to come to your aid, as it does to mine. He has pursued his own inclinations, without

the least regard to your claims on his affection, and as he has sowed he must reap. I should think it arrant baseness in you to continue to love him after the neglect with which he has treated you."

"I dare say it is," said Emily; "but it is not so easy as those who have never tried may think, to cure oneself of loving a person that has long been dear to us, by simply thinking of his unworthiness. Time may do it, perhaps."

"And to give time a fair chance, you should get free as soon as possible of this lonely, hopeless, melancholy sort of life."

"The life of a companion will, probably, be just as dull," said Emily.

"It will not be so laborious, at any rate," answered Miss Gage. "Now do, Emily, let me answer the advertisement. I do not know Mr. Miller myself, but I am sure, for my brother's sake, he will be disposed to listen to my recommendation."

And, after some persuasion, Emily having consented to the proposal, the letter was sent ; and, in due time, an answer arrived, requesting the appearance of the young lady in London.

“I am very glad you wrote so immediately,” said Mr. Miller ; “for the candidates are coming in thick and fast ; although, in mercy to ourselves, foreseeing the pressure that would ensue, we only said ‘a liberal salary will be given,’ instead of saying, as we were directed, that, ‘provided the person suited, terms would be no object.’ However, that is really the case ; and, if your young *protégée*, who, from your description, appears eminently fitted for the situation, can reconcile herself to the confinement, she may, I think, find it both very profitable and very comfortable.”

“There now, Emily, I am quite delighted that I insisted on writing. You must set off

to-morrow morning ; and I should not the least wonder if this is to be a turn in your fortune."

" I wonder what Gerald would think of it ?" said Emily.

" I'm sure that is of very little consequence," answered Miss Gage. " Go, and pack up your things, and think no more of Gerald, I entreat."

Emily observed the first injunction, though not the second ; and, in due time, she presented herself at Mr. Miller's, who had, in compliment to the sister of his old friend, requested she would make his house her home, till the affair was settled.

" I think you and the situation will suit each other admirably," said he. " I am sure my client must be a more unreasonable man than I think him, if he be not pleased ; and, although you may have some eccentricities to put up with, and may be required

to read out loud more than you like, you will meet with a great deal of kindness, and will live in the midst of luxury."

"What is the gentleman's name," inquired Emily, "and how old is he?"

"Why, his name we are not permitted to tell; he is so afraid of being troubled with direct applications from quarters that would not be agreeable, if the thing became public. With respect to his age, he is sixty-five."

"But that is not so very old," objected Emily, with some alarm, "I am afraid —"

"Oh, fear nothing," interrupted Mr. Miller, "everything will be quite correct; a female relation of his own lives with him, an elderly respectable woman, but she has become very deaf—deaf than he is a great deal, and that does not suit him."

"Then he is very deaf? They are both deaf?" inquired Emily, in some alarm.

"He'll hear what *you* say very well," said

Mr. Miller, "never fear. He can hear what he likes."

Emily had great misgivings ; she thought she should not like it at all, and regretted her journey to London, which had cost as much as would have maintained her for a fortnight ; but Mr. Miller was so kind that she forebore to enforce her objections, and consented to accompany him to the gentleman on the following morning ; whom perhaps our readers will have already guessed was no other than Mr. Livingstone. Nicky's hearing had become so imperfect as to render her unfit for her office of interpreter, and he wanted somebody to fill her situation. A young man, he affirmed, he could have no confidence in—he would be wild, if he were not stupid, and would not like the quiet, prosy life ; and either man or woman that was not young would not be sufficiently pliable to submit to his ways and notions.



Besides, he argued that men more easily found employment, and that there were many reduced gentlewomen to whom the situation would be a godsend ; “ for you know, Miller,” said he, “ if I like her, she shall not be turned destitute into the world when I die. I shall want somebody to take care of Nicky, and I will provide for her.”

Old Mr. Livingstone was sitting, as usual, with a file of Indian papers before him, when the lawyer and his *protégée* were announced ; but he arose with all the alacrity he was master of, and as much gallantry as he could assume, when he saw the young lady. In doing this, he dropt his spectacles, and Emily, with the natural deference for age of well-bred young people, stepped hastily forward, and picked them up for him.

“ Thank you, my dear,” he said, holding her hand for a moment, as he took them

from her, in order to get time to look at her. "Thank you," said he again, more warmly, and shaking the hand in a manner betokening that the result of the inspection had been satisfactory. "Sit down, sit down. Well, what do you say? Do you think you could put up with the humours of a gouty old Indian like me?"

"I dare say I could, sir," said Emily, blushing.

"At least, you are disposed to try, eh?" said Mr. Livingstone. "I don't know whether I am much worse than my neighbours," continued he, "but I know that age and India make one selfish, arbitrary, and impatient. Don't they, Nicky?" for the long habit of appealing to her made him forget she was deaf.

"What is it?" inquired Nicky.

"Mr. Livingstone is accusing himself of being selfish, arbitrary, and impatient,"

said Mr. Miller, who was sitting beside her.

"Oh, yes; that's true enough," answered Nicky.

"You hear!" said Mr. Livingstone to Emily, not the least offended by Nicky's sincerity, which, indeed, was one of her prime qualities in his eyes. "Does not that frighten you?"

"There are difficulties to be encountered in all situations," answered Emily; "even independence is not exempt from them."

"That's very true, my dear," said he; "very true, indeed. If that were better considered there would not be so many discontented people as there are in the world. However, it is not exactly the pleasantest thing in life for a young woman to be shut up with two old deaf people; I am very well aware of that."

"But necessity subjects people to much greater evils," observed Emily.

“Well, my dear, all I can say is, that I must endeavour to make it as much worth your while as I can, to bear with me,” said Mr. Livingstone; and, after some further conversation, in which, however, the subject of salary was not touched upon, the visit terminated, and Mr. Miller, having placed Emily in his carriage, returned to hold a private conference with the old gentleman.

“Her name is Dering,” said he; “she is the orphan daughter of a Colonel Dering; and was recommended to me by the sister of a very old friend of yours and mine, Miss Gage, of Bath.”

This communication led to further inquiries; and the information elicited seemed to set Mr. Livingstone a-thinking. He was naturally suspicious; probably, thought he, she is acquainted with that young fellow, old Gerald’s son. Who knows but this may be a plot to bring him about me? and the idea took such strong hold of him, that, much as

he had liked Emily, he felt greatly inclined to reject her; but, not wishing to communicate his real reason to Mr. Miller, he dismissed him, saying he should hear from him next day.

In the meantime, the lawyer, having finished his business for the morning, returned home to dinner; and, having congratulated Emily on the favourable impression he saw she had made, and on the high salary she was to receive—no less than £300 per annum—he asked her how she liked his client, and if she were fully prepared to encounter the difficulties he had dwelt upon?

“I like him very well indeed,” answered Emily. “I should think his was a very bearable sort of temper, in spite of the faults he owns to; and I am sure there is a great deal of real goodness behind it. But, what is his name? I suppose I may learn that now.”

“His name is Livingstone,” replied Mr.

Miller. "He is the rich Obiah Livingstone—perhaps you have heard of him—one of the richest commoners in the country, I suppose."

"Indeed!" said Emily, looking aghast.

"Why, what is the matter? Why do you look so surprised?" asked Mr. Miller.

"How unfortunate!" exclaimed Emily, who saw herself plunged again from ease and affluence into all her existing difficulties; for she felt that there would be a sort of indelicacy in accepting the situation, and placing herself in such an intimate relation with Mr. Livingstone, knowing what she knew; besides she saw at once to what suspicions she might subject herself.

"Why unfortunate?" inquired Mr. Miller.

"Because," replied Emily, "there are private reasons why I cannot accept the situation."

Mr. Miller expostulated with her; but he found it quite impossible to influence her

determination, or to elicit the motive of it. She even wished to return immediately to Bath; but to this he felt too much interested in her to consent; he promised to convey her decision to Mr. Livingstone, which he did by a note on the same evening; but he entreated her to remain at his house, for a week or two, till he sought out something that might suit her: and seeing that he was sincere in his offers of service, she accepted his invitation and good offices.

Mr. Livingstone felt a mixture of pleasure and displeasure, when he learnt that Emily had declined the situation. He was sorry to lose her, more especially as his suspicions were entirely removed by the circumstance; but, at the same time, he felt a certain disinclination to have anybody connected with the Gage family about him, after what had happened. The cause of her refusal he never suspected, as Emily had forbidden Mr. Miller to hint whence the objection had arisen; and as the

most desirable candidate soon supplied her place, no more was thought of the matter in Portland Place.

In the meantime, Emily remained at the lawyer's. He had found no situation for her; indeed, he had scarcely sought one. His wife was an invalid; and as they had no daughter, she found Emily's society so agreeable, that after a short time, they proposed her remaining there altogether, on a salary of one hundred pounds per annum. She accepted the proposal, and the arrangement suited all parties extremely well, till young Charles Miller, Gerald's friend, came home. When he heard who she was, he was extremely surprised to find her there; and still more so, when he found she could give him no intelligence of Gerald; for he was the confidant of the latter, and had long been aware of the engagement, which he mentioned to his father. "It is very odd," he said; "surely it must be broken off."



It was natural he should think so, and equally natural that, living under the same roof, and daily sitting at the same table with so attractive a person as Emily, he should become very desirous of succeeding his friend in her affections. But, doubtful of the actual relation in which the lovers stood, he felt it a point of honour not to advance his suit; so, though he did not fail to recommend himself by such little attentions as the circumstances of the case warranted, he said nothing, but bided his time, waiting to see if Gerald would reappear. But no Gerald came; and as he had generally an opportunity of seeing the letters that were laid on the hall-table, he was pretty sure that she received none from him. So, on the strength of this apparent alienation, he ventured to throw a little more warmth into his attentions, and at length declared his suit, but it was met by a gentle refusal. Emily really felt grateful, for Charles

Miller was the son of a prosperous lawyer, and she saw how entirely disinterested his affection was : added to this, he was amiable and clever, and she liked him exceedingly ; but she had not yet torn the image of Gerald from her heart. Perhaps it was fainter ; and certainly the pangs that his disaffection had for some time caused were much less poignant ; but the memory of his love was still dear to her, and she sometimes flattered herself that he might not be so much to blame as he appeared. Besides, even had she been free, she would have felt it an unjustifiable thing to take advantage of her situation, by allowing the son of the house to form an engagement that would, doubtless, be little pleasing to his parents. She even feared that these considerations might have obliged her to quit Mr. Miller's family ; but, on her refusal, Charles again left home, and so relieved her from this difficulty. But he did

not go without disclosing the secret of his attachment and rejection to his father, in whom he had entire confidence.

Mr. Miller, although he would not have vehemently opposed the match, was very well satisfied with the result ; and one day, when Mr. Baring was inquiring what had become of Miss Dering, he told him the circumstance ; accounting for her declining his son's proposal, by mentioning her engagement to the son of their mutual old friend and school-fellow, Mr. Gage. This led to some further inquiries ; and, at length, Mr. Miller was induced to ask Mr. Livingstone, if he could in any way account for her having declined so advantageous a situation as the one he had offered her.

" She was frightened at my stern, old, bronzed visage, or at our deafness, I suppose," replied Mr. Livingstone.

" That was certainly not the motive of her

refusal," replied Mr. Miller; "on the contrary, she liked you, and expressed herself very grateful for the liberal salary you proposed, and much obliged to me for my recommendation."

"Did she know my name?" inquired Mr. Livingstone.

"Not when she came here," replied Mr. Miller; "but, in the evening, thinking the matter settled, I told her who you were."

"And then she made no objection?"

"She did," answered the lawyer, who thought that, now the transaction was over, there was no necessity for making a secret of the matter.

Mr. Livingstone comprehended the affair in a moment. He saw that Gerald had told her about the will, and that she had declined the situation from the most delicate motives. To a man of his character, nothing she could

have done could have recommended her so powerfully to his good opinion. The result of his experience had been so unfortunate, that he scarcely believed in the existence of disinterestedness and lofty motives, where money was concerned. He resolved to cultivate her acquaintance, and bade Mr. Miller bring her, with his wife, to dine with him. The halo of brightness with which her dignified proceeding surrounded her in his imagination even extended to Gerald. He considered that surely the man must be worthy that was loved by such a woman ; and he remembered that it was a very unjust thing to punish him for Mr. Pilrig's indiscretion. Gerald could not help it, and it did not appear that he had taken any advantage of the information, even though it was clear he must be very poor, or he would not leave his intended wife in such necessity. So he determined to reconstruct a will in his favour, of course not employing the babbling Pilrig,

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but a stranger ; avoiding Mr. Miller for the same reason as formerly, namely, the intimacy between young Miller and Gerald ; being still determined that the secret should not be disclosed till his own time.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE very day that the projected dinner took place at Mr. Livingstone's, Gerald was married to Miss Graves, in Paris. Never went man to the altar less willingly. He had never loved Emily so much, nor had been ever so sensible of the value of what he was resigning, and the worthlessness of what he was accepting in exchange, as at the moment that he swore to love, honour, and cherish Rolinda Graves. He disliked her person, despised her intellect, and abhorred her cha-

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racter. He knew very well why she married him, so that his disgust was not even tempered by the solace of self-love ; and he very honestly thought, when he handed her into the carriage, after the ceremony, that he had much better have hanged himself to a bed-post than have tied himself for ever to a woman he hated. Why did he do it, then ? Because he was proud and idle, infirm of purpose, and weak in principle. He could neither endure poverty nor labour ; he had involved himself in difficulties, by entering into the society of those he could not afford to live amongst ; he was too proud to confess himself penniless, and too weak to disentangle himself, and kick away the trammels that compassed him about. So he sold himself to misery for wealth and splendour. But where were they ?—nowhere but in his own imagination. But this he did not yet know ; it was a truth that gradually opened upon him after his marriage. He then discovered that



Mr. Graves was a man living upon expedients, like himself, only so much more fertile and practised in them than he was.

Before Mr. Graves consented to the match, he had taken care to ascertain from Mr. Pilrig that there had been no alteration in the will. As things had turned out, he regretted exceedingly the communication he had made to his uncle, which might have had consequences very adverse to his present plans; but he was relieved by Mr. Pilrig's assurance that all was safe. In reality, Mr. Pilrig knew nothing about the matter; and, having never been employed by Mr. Livingstone since, he had very considerable misgivings on the subject. But it neither suited his pride nor his interest to say so.

Mr. Graves went back to Paris satisfied, and now that the marriage was accomplished, he hinted to Gerald that there could be no difficulty in extracting a little money from the fears of the indiscreet lawyer. Gerald

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represented how much difficulty he had had in doing so before ; but Mr. Graves set that down wholly to his want of experience in such transactions ; and determined on their starting for London immediately, to see what could be made of it ; attributing his own want of cash to some temporary accidents. Gerald, however, soon extracted the truth from his wife, and saw that he had been duped, or had rather duped himself ; but he was so thoroughly conscious of deserving it, that he hardly felt he had a right to complain ; and, as he had nothing to depend upon but the manœuvres and expedients of his father-in-law, he could not afford to quarrel with him.

Mr. Pilrig was annoyed at this man of large estates coming to borrow money from him. Mr. Graves pleaded temporary difficulties, and the money was lent and spent ; then came another application, and another—and refusals were met by threats. The little

lawyer was at his wits' end. He was not rich, and was only now getting into a profitable line of business ; whilst his purse was being drained by these exactions at one end as fast as it filled at the other. But then his professional reputation was at stake, and his fears being stronger than his understanding, he for some time weakly yielded to menaces, that, had he had more fortitude, he would have defied in the beginning. Better far is it to face the utmost evil our enemy can do us than sell ourselves to slavery by succumbing to his threats.

"I don't see, Gerald," said Mr. Graves, one day, to his son-in-law, "why you should not try what could be done with my uncle Livingstone. You say he and your father were great friends : that is a claim in itself. Then—selfish and suspicious as he is—it is not likely that he would wish the man he means to make his heir should die of starva-

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tion before he comes to the fortune. Why not make an application to him?"

"Because I am afraid of risking everything by it," answered Gerald. "You know what Pilrig told us; besides, you know he hates you, because you are his natural heir."

"Ay, that's very true; but I did not play my cards well. I did not know the man; now I do. You shall go a very different way to work. You shall write him a letter, making no allusion to the will, but describing your difficulties, and asking for the smallest assistance, to enable you to do something for yourself, on the strength of his being the only surviving friend of your father in a situation to aid you. Then, if he sees you, you must own to having been imprudent; and if he asks you about Pilrig and the will, say that you thought the man was drunk, and that you never believed a word of it. The thing is to get about him, without

awakening his distrust. He is as strong in his attachments as he is virulent in his hatreds. He was in love with a girl in his youth—she died, and he never got over it; and although Nicky is the most insufferable of bores, his kindness to her has been unvarying; and, I have no doubt, she has an ample provision for her life, in case she survives him. Yes, Gerald, I think I see our way clearly through this business (Mr. Graves was very sanguine); if you play your cards well, the game's your own. Come, let us draw up the letter."

Gerald thought the plan might succeed too, and consented to make the experiment, though with much less animated hopes than Mr. Graves, who was never depressed at anything; but, having no principle and very little feeling, pushed on, boasting and lying through life, always hoping the next turn of the die would make his fortune. Gerald, on the contrary, had both principle and feeling,

but they were weak and unstable, and they had succumbed in the struggle with his idleness, his selfishness, and his ill-directed pride. But, though not strong enough to govern, they were strong enough to gall him, now that he had violated their laws: and his pride helped to make him heartily ashamed and disgusted both with his conduct and his position. Added to which, there was the wife that he hated for ever at his side—not the less hateful that, since their marriage, she had grown fond of him. He was, as we have said, handsome and clever, and his civil indifference had piqued her into liking him.

However, he wrote the letter according to Mr. Graves's advice, and in due time there came an invitation to call at an appointed hour.

"Don't say you are married, Gerald," said Mr. Graves. "He hates me, and the effect might be very prejudicial to your interests. Sink the wife."

Gerald wished he could ; and as he went along, on his way to Portland Place, he very naturally reflected upon his own folly. If this step were to be taken, why had he not taken it before he tied himself to Rolinda ? who, instead of being likely to advance his fortunes, was so far an impediment to them, that he was positively advised by her own father to conceal his connexion with her. How he cursed his madness and extravagance that had brought him into such a dilemma. In short, he felt so wretched and despairing, that he had no occasion to make up the face of a distressed man, as Mr. Graves had directed him to do, when he entered Mr. Livingstone's library : he was distressed enough in reality for all purposes.

Mr. Livingstone received him very well—indeed, kindly ; first asked him much about his father, and then gradually fell to speak of his own situation. Gerald owned to great imprudence.

“It was my misfortune, sir, not to like the Church, for which my father designed me. I ought to have overcome my objection, for it was the only hope he had of providing for me; but, trusting to get into the army or some situation more congenial to my tastes, I neglected my studies; and when my father died, I had no longer the means of remaining at College.”

“And what have you been doing since?” inquired Mr. Livingstone.

“Partly living on the little money I got by the sale of my father’s furniture, sir; I had also a few College friends who invited me to their houses, and I staid hanging about upon them longer than I should, in hopes that as they were well connected, they might have done something for me.”

“Bad look out,” said Mr. Livingstone; “but what would you like to do now?”

“Anything,” replied Gerald, “that I am fit for.”



"And what *are* you fit for?" inquired Mr. Livingstone.

"I always wished to go into the army, sir," answered Gerald.

"You are too old," responded Mr. Livingstone. "Can you think of nothing else?"

"A situation, sir," suggested Gerald.

"What do you say to a wife?" said Mr. Livingstone, with a sort of comic abruptness.

"A wife, sir?" answered Gerald. "I am afraid a wife would be more likely to augment my difficulties than relieve them."

"But what if she were an heiress?" said the old gentleman.

"Money, sir, of course, would be very acceptable to a person in my situation," replied Gerald; "but a marriage of interest, sir—a marriage without affection—" and, after hesitating, he stopped, from mere shame and conscious degradation.

"Oh," said Mr. Livingstone, "but why should it be a marriage without affection? Why should a woman want attractions because she is an heiress? Surely, she may be as beautiful, amiable, and accomplished, as if she were the daughter of a poor curate or a half-pay officer."

Gerald blushed at the last words, for they brought Emily to his mind; but at the same time they suggested a ready excuse, and he hinted something about his affections being engaged.

"Oh, that alters the case, certainly," replied Mr. Livingstone; "and I am sorry to hear it, because it puts an end to my plan. The young lady I meant to propose to you is a ward of mine, and will be one of the richest heiresses in the country. She is, moreover, lovely, both in person and mind, and the man who gets her will be a very fortunate fellow, I assure you. Come, think twice

before you say no. I am certain she has no attachment, and will listen to my recommendation."

"It cannot be, sir," answered Gerald, with a sigh of deep regret.

"It is true, I may be able to procure you some sort of situation in the India House, but the candidates are numerous, and advancement slow. You will probably have a good deal of confinement at the desk, and small emoluments for several years; whilst the alternative is a large fortune and a lovely wife."

But Gerald was firm, of course; he muttered the words, "honour and affection, and engagement of several years," blushed and stammered, cursed his own folly and precipitance, not forgetting his wife and her parents, whom he consigned energetically to the devil; but he was fast bound—there was no getting free, kick and struggle as he would; so he was obliged to make a virtue of

necessity, and take credit with Mr. Livingstone for the most inexorable fidelity. The old gentleman shook his head, said he would see if he could do anything for him, but that he feared that he might live to regret his pertinacity ; and finally desired him to return at nine o'clock on the evening of the eighth day, when he would acquaint him with the result of his exertions in his favour. "By the bye," said he, as Gerald was quitting the room, "has the lady you are engaged to any money?"

"None, sir," replied Gerald ; "none whatever."

On the same afternoon, a solicitor was sent for, and directions given for the intended will, which was duly prepared and signed by the day appointed for Gerald's visit. Invitations were also sent to Mr. and Mrs. Miller and Emily, to take tea in Portland Place on that evening at eight o'clock ; and the party were already assembled in the drawing-room,

when Gerald knocked at the door below, and, according to Mr. Livingstone's directions, was shown into the library. Begging his company to excuse him for a short time, the old gentleman descended the stairs in better spirits, and a more agreeable frame of mind than he could remember to have found himself in for the last thirty years. The whole thing had turned up so neatly ; he had had an opportunity of testing the disinterestedness of his intended heir, in a manner so entirely satisfactory ; the young people pleased him, and he had found an occasion of emphatically rewarding constancy and affection—sentiments with which, from his own early disappointment, he had an exceeding sympathy ; but of whose frequent existence he was extremely sceptical. He chuckled with pleasure as he entered the room.

“ Well, young man,” said he, “ I hope you have thought better of this business ; for, to say the truth, I fear it will be impossible to

meet with a situation that you will not find very objectionable."

"Of what business, sir?" asked Gerald.

"Of my proposal. The young lady is at this moment in the house, and has expressed her willingness to accept you, for it appears you are not wholly unknown to her. Indeed, I have reason to believe that she really has entertained a preference for you for some time."

Here the images of the various young beauties he had danced and flirted with at Madame de Violane's recurred to the mind of the mortified Gerald, and he wondered which of them it might be.

"Her present fortune will be two hundred thousand pounds; hereafter, something much more considerable."

Gerald's head seemed in a whirl; the past, the present, the future, darted through his mind with the rapidity of an electrical shock—what he was, what he might have been;

his madness—his stupidity—his “d—d ill luck.” His throat was parched, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; so that when Mr. Livingstone pressed him for an answer, he could only gasp out, “It cannot—cannot be.”

“Well,” said Mr. Livingstone, “I shall only make one effort to shake your determination, and that is, the sight of the lady herself;” and, before the unfortunate victim could expostulate, the old gentleman had left the room.

Gerald felt disposed to rush out of the house; but the dread of offending Mr. Livingstone, and so losing what appeared his only chance of escape from utter destitution, prevented him. So he sat, with his eyes fixed vacantly upon the door, till it opened, and Mr. Livingstone, pushing in Emily, cried: “There, look at her; and if you don’t like her, why I must try and get you fifty pounds

a year at the India House, to keep you from starving."

The door was shut, the old man gone, and the young people in each other's arms in a second. Emily forgot the neglect—Gerald forgot the wife: young loves, past scenes, were alone remembered. Emily was all happiness. Gerald was in a delirium; it was too much for his brain; he pressed her convulsively to his heart, and covered her face with kisses. Emily felt how he loved, and thought how he must have suffered; and she tried to calm him, and lead him into conversation, but in vain.

Some time—they knew not how long—had passed in these wild transports, when the door again opened, and Mr. Livingstone entered with parchments and papers in his hand. "Come!" said he, "you have years of love and love-making before you—this evening must be mine. It's long since I



have made anybody happy, and now that I hope I have done it completely, you must come up stairs to the drawing-room, and let me enjoy the sight of my work. First, however, before we go, I will put this deed in your hand, Gerald—it is your wife's marriage-settlement of two hundred thousand pounds ; I have chosen to vest the property in her, rather than in you, for various reasons. One is, that I know her better, and am attached to her ; another, that I am aware, from your own confessions, that she is better fitted to take care of it. But a good husband need very seldom complain of this sort of arrangement ; few women are so ungenerous as to make him feel any difference : and I am sure Emily Dering will not be one of them !”

Emily turned a sweet smile of assurance on Gerald, but his lips were compressed, and his features ghastly.

“ Come,” continued Mr. Livingstone, “ they are waiting tea for us ; let us go up

stairs ;” and he gave Emily his arm. “Remember, Gerald,” said he, tapping the young man on the back ; “remember, when I die, she will be my heir.”

Silently and mechanically, Gerald followed to the drawing-room, shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Miller, took his seat, and went through the dumb show of the tea-table. Everybody was struck with his countenance and strange demeanour, except Nicky, who never observed anything. Mr. Livingstone thought that this sudden heap of joy had crushed him for the moment. “He will be all right to-morrow,” whispered he to Mr. Miller : but the lawyer’s sagacity, and Emily’s affection, were not so easily satisfied. The former was completely puzzled—he began to doubt his attachment to Emily ; but she, strong in her conviction, from what had passed below, was sure that, whatever it might be, it was not that that was affecting him so strangely ; and, true womanlike, she

felt that any other woe must be light and remediable. So she tried to cheer him ; smiled on him, gave him sweet loving looks ; and when they took their leave, and he handed her into Mr. Miller's carriage, she pressed his hand tenderly, and bade him " see her to-morrow."

Gerald went home, knocked at his father-in-law's door, and, on being admitted, asked for a night candlestick, and ascended to his room ; locked himself in, loaded his pistols, put one in his mouth, and blew out his brains. The report brought up the family, but, when the door was broken open, he was dead.

His wife died a few months afterwards, in bringing a child into the world, for which Emily amply provided ; and when some years had elapsed, and her grief and regret had subsided, she married Charles Miller.



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## THE STORY OF LESURQUES.

ONE of the great grievances under which the French nation laboured, previous to the revolution of 1792, was the extreme inequality with which the law was administered. The judges were too frequently corruptible ; the influence of the aristocracy was enormous ; and if neither of these succeeded in averting an unpleasant verdict, the King's grace was ready to come to the rescue, provided it were solicited by a pretty woman, or that any

interest, of whatsoever nature, disposed his Majesty to a favourable view of the criminal's case. The law therefore became, in too many instances, a mere instrument of oppression, from which the people had everything to fear and nothing to hope; whilst the aristocracy used it as a convenient veil for their injustice and exactions.

It was to remedy these crying evils that the National Assembly established the trial by jury; but as people who have long suffered from one extreme are apt to seek a remedy in the other, they at the same time abrogated the right of pardon, enacting the terrible statute that, provided all the forms of law had been duly observed in a process, the verdict of the jury should be irrevocable. It was not long before instances occurred which exhibited the fearful nature of this edict; and of these we are about to relate one of the most remarkable; but so distrustful had experience rendered the people, that they

could never be brought to annul, but only to modify the law. Unwillingly, they consented to restore the royal privilege of pardon; but to this day, in France, not only cannot the verdict of a jury be reversed, but it is held criminal to arraign its justice. Neither, when they pronounce their decision, can they recommend the criminal to mercy; the sentence once registered must be executed; but to avert the fatal consequences of this rigour, they have recourse to two expedients. One is, that if they entertain a shadow of doubt with respect to the guilt of the prisoner, they give in a verdict of "guilty, but with extenuating circumstances." This particularity will account for the verdict in the case of Madame Lafarge, which surprised everybody unacquainted with the forms of criminal jurisprudence in France. There were no extenuating circumstances apparent to the public; but the jury feeling too well assured of her guilt to acquit her, and yet not so

certain of it as to feel quite satisfied that it was right to take her life, had recourse to this *mezzotermine*.

In cases, however, where the evidence has appeared, at the time of the trial, so conclusive that this saving clause has been omitted, should any subsequent disclosures raise a doubt in favour of the prisoner, the Court of Cassation comes to his aid. They take upon themselves to review the proceedings, and in most instances succeed in discovering that there is some flaw in the indictment, or that some form of law has been overlooked, which involves a necessity for a new trial. If neither of these imperfections be found, however, the sentence must be executed, even though the judge and jury were morally convinced of the innocence of the sufferer. A French jury cannot err, nor can their verdicts be revised.

It was in the latter end of the month of April, of the year 1796, that a gentleman of



the name of Joseph Lesurques arrived with his family in Paris. His age was about thirty, his fortune easy, his character unimpeached. He had served his country with credit in the regiment of Auvergne, and, since his retirement from military life, had filled respectably and without emolument the situation of *chef de bureau* in his native district. He was a man deeply attached to his family, undisturbed by ambition, unseduced by pleasure. His income of seven hundred a year sufficed for all his wants, and his object in coming to reside at Paris for a few years, was not to plunge into its gaieties, but to afford his children those advantages that the provinces could not supply. On the arrival of this family in the metropolis, they established themselves as lodgers in the house of a notary called Monnet, in the Rue Montmartre; arrangements were made for the instruction of the young people, and Monsieur and Madame Lesurques anticipated

much satisfaction in watching their progress. It will be admitted, we think, that the reasonable views of these worthy persons entitled them to all the happiness they promised themselves ; yet so precarious are human hopes and expectations, that Joseph Lesurques and his family had not been many days in Paris before, without any fault of their own, they were plunged into an ocean of troubles from which no exertions of themselves or their friends could ever extricate them ; an ocean whose waters of sorrow to this day embitter the bread of their descendants.

There resided at that time in Paris a gentleman of the name of Guesno ; he, as well as Lesurques, came from Douai, where the property of both was situated ; and being gratified at the arrival of his townsman, the new comer was scarcely settled in his lodgings when Guesno invited him to meet a few friends of his, in the *Rue des Boucheries*,

where he proposed to give a breakfast in celebration of this reunion. The immediate origin of this compliment appears to have been, that Lesurques had formerly lent Guesno two thousand francs, and though the latter had repaid the debt he still felt bound by the obligation. The company, for some reason or other, seems to have fallen short of the entertainer's intentions, since the only guest besides Lesurques was the *Sieur Richard*, the owner of the house. After they were assembled, however, a young man of the name of *Couriol* happening to call to speak to *Richard*, he was invited to join the party, which, it will be observed, thus consisted of four persons, all young men, dressed in the height of the fashion of that time, which was a fashion more remarkable for extravagance than taste. They wore, for example, ponderous pig-tails, top-boots with silver spurs, very large eye-glasses, a quantity of jewellery, and, amongst the rest, two long

watch-chains dangling from their waistcoat-pockets. As this costume was *de rigueur*, they were necessarily all dressed alike.

During the breakfast nothing particular seems to have occurred except the arrival of Couriol, who was known only to Richard. The appearance of this visitor does not seem to have been altogether prepossessing, for although he was a well grown man of twenty-five, and had a set of features that would be commonly called handsome, there was something in his countenance that inspired distrust and suspicion. He had black bushy eyebrows, and a pair of dark unsettled eyes that could not look anybody straight in the face. In the course of the conversation, Lesurques explained the motives of his removal to Paris, and expressed a hope that he might have an early opportunity of entertaining the present company at his own table.

“Your plans for the future seem well

arranged," observed Couriol, lifting his eyes from his plate, from which they had hitherto scarcely wandered; "but who can foresee the future? Who knows what may happen to him before to-morrow morning? I sincerely wish that your anticipations for enjoying peace and happiness in the bosom of your family may be realized; but if they are, you may consider yourself peculiarly favoured by fortune, for, during the last five or six years, there is not a citizen in France, however secure his position may have seemed, who could reckon on the fee simple of it for a week."

This evil augury of Couriol's seemed the more strange and sudden, that until that moment he had never opened his lips, but had appeared buried in thought; whilst the richness of his attire, and his excellent appetite, had not prepared the company for the announcement of such desponding views. After the *déjeuné*, which lasted about two

hours, the party adjourned to the Palais Royal, where having taken a cup of coffee in the *Caveau* they separated.

Four days had elapsed since the breakfast in the *Rue des Boucheries*, when at an early hour in the morning of the 8th *Floréal* (a month which consisted in the then French calendar, of half April and half May), the guard at the *Barrière de Charenton* observed four horsemen pass through the gate, and take the road to Melun. It was not difficult to perceive that the animals they rode, though handsome and in good condition, were on hire ; whilst, from the lively jests that seemed to be circulating amongst the cavaliers, they were supposed to be leaving the city for a day's diversion in the country. A closer observer might perhaps have discovered some traces of anxiety beneath their smiles and laughter ; and a slight metallic clang that was heard now and then, when their impatient horses reared or plunged,

would have suggested the suspicion that they carried arms beneath their long riding coats. This gay humour, however, only extended to three of the party; the fourth seemed of a different temper. He rode somewhat in the rear of the others, taking no part in their conversation. His eyes were fixed and his countenance gloomy. This man was Couriol.

The little party reached Mongeron, a village on the road to Melun, between twelve and one o'clock; one of them having galloped forward for the purpose of ordering a luncheon to be prepared at the *Hôtel de la Poste*. They ate with excellent appetite, and after their repast two of them called for pipes and smoked very deliberately till towards three o'clock, when having taken their coffee at a neighbouring casino, they mounted their horses again and pursued their journey. The road they selected was that which leads through the forest of Senart, and as it was

protected from the sun on each side by rows of elm trees in luxuriant foliage, they allowed the reins to drop on their horses' necks, and advanced at a foot's pace, as if to enjoy the pleasant shade.

In this manner they reached Lieursaint, a beautiful village, surrounded at that period by a forest, and famous in history as the scene of Henry IV.'s adventure with the miller; and here they made a somewhat unusual stay; one of their horses had lost a shoe, and the chain which attached the spur of one of the riders to his boot was broken. This last, on entering the village, stopped at the house of a woman called Chatelain, a *limonadière*, of whom he requested a cup of coffee, and asked also for some strong thread to repair his chain withal, which she gave him; but observing that he was not very expert at the job, she summoned her maid to his assistance, during which operations they had both of course ample leisure to notice his person and features.



In the meantime, the others had ridden through the village as far as an inn kept by a man of the name of Champeaux, where they alighted and called for wine; whilst the horse that had lost its shoe was sent to the blacksmith's. They then all repaired to the widow Chatelain's, where they played several games at billiards; after which, having once more refreshed themselves with a draught of wine at the inn, they mounted their horses, and started in the direction of Melun, about half-past eight in the evening.

When Champeaux returned into the room they had just quitted, he found a sabre in its sheath, that one of the party had forgotten. This he immediately sent after them, but they were already too far on their way to be overtaken by the messenger. In about an hour afterwards, however, the owner returned in great haste to reclaim it; it was he whose spur had been repaired at the *limonadière's*,

and, having hastily tossed off a glass of brandy, and buckled on his sword, he put his horse to its speed, and rode off as rapidly as he had come.

Precisely at the same moment, the courier bearing the mail from Paris to Lyons drove into the village of Lieursaint, for the purpose of changing horses. It was exactly half-past nine o'clock, and already quite dark. He was presently away again, with fresh horses and postilion, galloping at full speed towards the forest of Senart. The carriage which in those days conveyed the French mails is described as an elegant, light vehicle, with a strong box behind for the letters, and room within for two persons, one place being occupied by the courier in charge of the bags, and the other being let to any traveller who was willing to pay for it. On the present occasion, this place was occupied by a gentleman, apparently about thirty years of age,

who had booked himself under the name of "Laborde, silk-mercant at Lyons." At about two hours' journey from Lieursaint, the road sinks into a hollow, out of which it rises on the other side by a very steep ascent, and up this the postilion was slowly walking his horses, when there was a rustle in the thicket, followed by the sudden appearance of four men, two of whom seized the horses' heads, whilst the other two attacked the postilion, and in a moment separated his head from his body; at the same instant the courier was stabbed to the heart by his fellow-traveller—both murders being performed so dexterously that not a cry escaped from the victims. The coffer was then forced open, and the assassins possessed themselves of all the money the courier carried with him, amounting to a sum of 75,000 francs, in bills, bank-notes, and silver. They then returned immediately to Paris, the fifth conspirator being mounted on one of the carriage-horses, and betwixt the

hours of four and five in the morning they re-entered the city by the *Barrière de Rambouillet*.

A bolder and more reckless enterprise than this has seldom been undertaken, and even at that period, when deeds of blood and violence were too common in France, it awakened terror and amazement throughout the country. The assassins were scarcely in Paris before intelligence of what had occurred had reached the authorities, and the most rigorous measures been instituted for their discovery.

The first indication met with was the post-horse, which the rider had turned loose on the *Boulevards*, and which was found wandering about the *Place Royale*. It was also ascertained that four other horses, bathed in sweat, evidently much over-ridden, had been brought into the yard of a stable-keeper named Muiron, at five o'clock in the morning. Muiron admitted at once that they had been hired on the previous day by two persons

known to him ; one was a Monsieur Bernard, the other was Couriol. The former was instantly arrested, but the latter, with the rest of the band, had effected his escape ; nevertheless, as the whole country was on the alert, and the descriptions given by the innkeepers, where the four horsemen had baited, were extremely precise, there seemed little chance of their ultimate evasion.

With respect to the fifth, the people at the post-office, where he had taken his place, described his person with equal accuracy. In the mean time, Couriol had taken refuge in the house of a friend, named Bruer, who resided at Château Thierry, whither he was traced and arrested. In the same house was found Guesno, who appears to have gone there on business of his own. They however seized him and Bruer also, together with their papers ; but the two latter having clearly proved their *alibi*, were dismissed ;

whereupon Guesno demanded back his papers.

“Come to-morrow morning,” said the magistrate, “and they shall be delivered to you.”

Now, Guesno was extremely anxious about his papers, the want of which was retarding some business he had in hand, so on the ensuing morning he started betimes for the police-office, and, as the Fates would have it, who should he meet on his way but his old friend Lesurques! Naturally enough, they fell to discussing this strange affair, which was then the theme of every tongue, and, engaged in conversation, they proceeded arm-in-arm till they reached the office, where partly from curiosity and partly for the sake of his friend's company, Lesurques consented to wait for Guesno till his business was concluded. They were, however, so early that Daubenton the magistrate had not yet ar-

rived, so the two friends seated themselves in the ante-room, through which they expected him to pass, where several other persons were also waiting, and amongst them the witnesses who had been brought in from Lieursaint and Mongeron to give evidence against Couriol and the others.

Daubenton, in the meanwhile, having entered his office by another door, was busily engaged in looking over the informations relative to this business, when one of his assistants hastily entered to inform him that some women in the ante-room declared that two of the murderers were calmly sitting amongst them. The magistrate could not believe it, and he sent for the women, separately, to question them; but, in answer to his inquiries, they both positively reiterated their assertions. One was the maid Santon, who had served the travellers whilst dining at the inn at Mongeron; the other was Grossetête, servant to Madame Châtelain, the *limonadière*, who

had mended the spur, given them coffee, and seen them playing at billiards; they were confident that they were not mistaken.

Still the magistrate, who appears to have been most worthy of his office, could not bring himself to believe that the guilty parties would so recklessly run into the lion's jaws; and he urged the women to consider well the consequences of what they were saying—the lives of two of their fellow-creatures hung upon their breath—but their conviction was not to be shaken. He then bade them sit down, whilst he called in the gentlemen separately, and conversed with them both on indifferent matters, and also on the late assassination. When he dismissed them, promising Guesno to send him his papers, he again turned to the women, whom he hoped to find ready to retract their assertions; on the contrary, they were more than ever confident of their correctness. Nothing therefore remained for the magistrate but to



order the immediate arrest of Guesno and Lesurques, although himself, especially after the late conversation, was intimately persuaded of their entire innocence. What a dreadful situation for him !

The two prisoners were immediately confronted with the witnesses, who one and all swore to their persons, agreeing, without exception, that Lesurques was the man whose spur-chain had been broken, and who had afterwards forgotten his sword at Lieursaint.

On the day of his arrest, Lesurques wrote the following letter to a friend :—

“ Dear S——,

“ Since my arrival in Paris, I have met with nothing but vexations ; but a misfortune has now overtaken me that exceeds belief. I am accused of a crime, the very thoughts of which make me shudder with horror ! Three women and two men, none of whom I ever beheld in my life before, have positively

sworn that I was one of the band who murdered the Lyons' courier! I leave you, who know me so well, and are also pretty well acquainted with the mode in which I have passed my time since I came here, to judge of the probability of this astounding accusation. But the dreadful consequences that may ensue, if this accursed lie cannot be disproved, render the most energetic proceedings necessary. For God's sake! assist me with your memory. Try and recall where, and with whom, I was at the time these people assert that they saw me."

The writer then enumerates all the persons he can recollect to have conversed with on the day he was supposed to have been absent from Paris, including the Citizen Texier, General Cambrai, the Demoiselle Eugénie, Citizen Ledru, his wife's hair-dresser, the workmen employed in his house, and the porter that kept his gate; and he concludes his letter by a request that his

friend would frequently visit, and endeavour to support the spirits of his wife.

Lesurques, Guesno, Couriol, Bernard, Richard, and Bruer, were all brought to trial, the three first as principals, and the latter as abettors or receivers, on which occasion the witnesses swore as positively as before to the persons of Lesurques and Guesno. The last, however, proved a most satisfactory *alibi*, and Bruer succeeded in entirely establishing his innocence. Lesurques was less fortunate, although his *alibi* was also sworn to by fifteen respectable witnesses, some of whom had lunched with him, others dined with him, at such hours as rendered it physically impossible he could have been at Mongeron or Lieursaint on the day in question. The porter, and workmen employed in his house, also gave testimony in his favour.

It was just as the jury were about to yield to the weight of this evidence that the well-meant zeal of a townsman of Lesurques

proved fatal to him. This man was a jeweller called Legrand, who had sworn to having transacted some business of importance with the accused on the day mentioned in the indictment, which fact was corroborated by another jeweller named Aldenoff. Elated at the weight of testimony brought in favour of his friend, Legrand most unfortunately proffered his books, where, he said, a certain entry would be found establishing the fact of Lesurques' presence in Paris on the 8th Floréal. The books were accordingly sent for and examined; but an evident erasure and alteration of a 9 into an 8 overthrew, not only the evidence of the jewellers, who were very respectable men, but seems to have cast a doubt on that of all the other witnesses. The president of the court pressed for an explanation, which Legrand not being able to give, an order was issued for his arrest, whereupon the poor man, entirely losing his presence of mind, confessed that

he did not know to a certainty on what day he had seen Lesurques, but that, being entirely assured of his innocence, he had made that alteration in his book with the hope of establishing what he was satisfied was true. From that moment the tide of opinion changed—the evidence of the other witnesses was looked upon as the result of a conspiracy, and a certain degree of anger and resentment took possession of the minds both of judge, jury, and audience. Lesurques alone was calm ; the more things went against him, the more unmoved he appeared.

At this critical juncture, whilst the jury had retired to consider the verdict, a woman, in a state of excitement bordering on insanity, rushed into the court, and demanded to be heard. Being brought before the president, she declared, with the utmost vehemence, that Lesurques was entirely innocent of the crime imputed to him.

“The witnesses are deceived,” said she, “by the extraordinary resemblance which exists between him and the real criminal, for whom they mistake him. I know him well—he has fled—and his name is Dubosque.”

This woman, Madelaine Brebon, was Couriol’s mistress; and in making this avowal, to which her conscience urged her, she admitted the guilt of her lover. Yet was she not believed, nor was her evidence investigated; the ill effects of Legrand’s confession was yet too recent. Couriol, Lesurques, Bernard, and Richard, were found guilty—the three first being condemned to death, the last to the galleys. Guesno and Bruer were acquitted.

As soon as the sentence was pronounced, Lesurques rose from his seat, and, with entire composure, declared his innocence, adding, that “if a murder on the highway were a fearful crime, it would be well for his

judges to remember that a judicial murder was no less so."

Then Couriol arose. "I am guilty," said he; "I confess it; but Lesurques is innocent, and Bernard had no part in the murder."

Four times he reiterated this assertion, and from his prison he wrote a letter, full of sorrow and repentance, to the same purpose. "Lesurques knew nothing of the affair; the names of the other parties concerned were Vidal, Rossi, Durochat, and Dubosque; it is the last for whom Lesurques is mistaken."

Madelaine Brebon also made another effort to convince the authorities of their mistake; but, strange to say, neither her assurances, nor those of Couriol, who could have no interest but a conscientious one, in denying for Lesurques what he avowed for himself, were sufficient to save the life of

this unfortunate victim. It is true, a petition was sent into the Directory, and the Directory referred the matter to the *corps législatif*. All they asked for was a postponement of the execution.

"Must Lesurques die," said they, "because he has the misfortune to resemble a criminal?"

The answer of the legislative body was, "that the process had been strictly legal; that a single case could not justify the violation of a well-considered statute; and that to set aside the verdict of a jury for the reasons advanced, would be equivalent to arraigning the wisdom and justice of the law as established." Since the right of pardon no longer existed, there thus remained neither hope nor help for Lesurques.

On the day of his execution, he wrote the following letter to his wife, which, from the stoicism it exhibited, was very much admired



by the Republic : at that period, in the midst of their disorders, affecting a great admiration of classical heroism :

“ My dearest love,

“ No man can elude his destiny—it is mine to die on a scaffold, the victim of an error. I shall meet my fate as becomes me. I send you some of my hair ; when my children are old enough, you will divide it amongst them. It is the only inheritance I have now to leave them.”

Unhappily, it was so, his whole property being confiscated to the state.

After sentence was pronounced on him, Lesurques also caused the following letter to be inserted in the public journals, addressed to the real criminal :

“ Be thou, in whose place I am to die, content with the sacrifice of my life. The

day will probably yet come that you will find yourself in the hands of justice—then, remember me! Think of my children, and of their broken-hearted mother, covered with disgrace. Restore them their good name; repair their dreadful misfortune, which has wholly originated in the fatal resemblance betwixt you and me.”

The executions took place on the 10th of May, 1797. It was Maundy-Thursday, and Lesurques, who conducted himself to the last with the most heroic calmness and self-possession, went to the scaffold in a complete suit of white, which he wore as the symbol of his innocence. He said, he regretted it was not a day later—Good Friday being more suitable for such a sacrifice. As they went through the streets, Couriol stood up in the cart, and cried aloud to the people, “I am guilty, but Lesurques is innocent!” The latter died forgiving all men, and calling God

to witness the injustice of his sentence. Thus the climax of all injustice was committed through the very fanaticism of justice. Nothing was stable in the Republic, so they determined that at least they would have one thing to hold fast by, and that was the law, right or wrong.

Amongst those who were perfectly satisfied of Lesurques' innocence was Daubenton, the Justice of the Peace; and as he had unfortunately been a principal agent in the catastrophe, he felt that nothing could appease his remorse but the reintegration of the victim's fame—a tardy, but, as regarded his family, most important reparation; and as this could only be effected by the arrest of the other three criminals named by Couriol, he resolved never to relax his exertions, till he laid his hands upon them. It would fill a volume to recount the means he used to effect his object; we can only here detail the result of his self-imposed and meritorious labours.

Whereupon he made a full confession, confirming in every particular the account given by Couriol. He had himself fled on the first alarm, and the name of Lesurques he had never heard till after his execution. It was Dubosque that had repaired his spur at Mongeron—Dubosque that had forgotten his sword at Lieursaint.

Some time elapsed before the other three were taken, but finally the exertions of Daubenton were crowned with success: Vidal, Dubosque, and Rossi, were arrested, and paid the penalty of their crimes. The confessions of Durochat and Rossi coincided entirely with that of Couriol; Vidal and Dubosque denied to the last, though no doubt remained of their guilt. A light wig, such as he had worn on the fatal day, being placed on the head of Dubosque, the resemblance betwixt him and Lesurques became so remarkable, as perfectly to account for the unfortunate error of the witnesses, who had

also been led by a certain similarity of feature to mistake Guesno for Vidal.

The innocence of Joseph Lesurques was thus made manifest to all the world ; nobody could doubt it ; and his family seemed naturally entitled to the restoration of their property, and such a full and perfect vindication of his fame as a revision of his sentence alone could afford. And for these, we will not say favours, but sacred rights, they have never ceased to supplicate, backed by the support and assistance of several eminent jurists ; whilst the good magistrate, Daubenton, devoted not only the latter years of his life, but a considerable part of his fortune, to the promotion of their suit. But, alas ! without success—the verdict of a French jury cannot be revised !

In 1842 died the widow of Lesurques, leaving a son and daughter, from whom, on her death-bed, she required a promise that they would never relax in those duties to

their father's memory to which she had devoted her life. Her eldest son had fallen, some years before, in the service of his country. During the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X., a part of the property of this unfortunate family was restored to them—not as a *restitution*, however, but as a *favour* !

Never was there a more lamentable verification of the maxim, *summum jus summa injuria*, than is afforded by the story of Joseph Lesurques. Man is too fallible a being to venture on irrevocable statutes. We are the subjects of the law ; but justice and mercy are the laws of God, and to these all human institutions must yield precedence.

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### III.

#### PRIEST OF ST. QUENTIN.

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### III.

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#### THE PRIEST OF ST. QUENTIN.

It is in the annals of the doings and sufferings of the good and brave spirits of the earth that we should learn our lessons. It is by these that our hearts are mellowed, our minds exalted, and our souls nerved to go and do likewise. But there are occasionally circumstances connected with the history of great crimes that render them the most impressive of homilies; fitting them to be set aloft as beacons to warn away the frail mortal,

tossed on the tempest of his passions, from the destruction that awaits him if he pursues his course ; and such instruction we hold may be best derived from those cases in which the subsequent feelings of a criminal are disclosed to us ; those cases, in short, in which the chastisement proceeds from within instead of from without ; that chastisement that no cunning concealment, no legal subtlety, no eloquent counsel, no indulgent judge, can avert ; but which, do what we will, fly where we may, “*Monte en croupe et gallope avec nous.*” It is because we think the history of Antoine Mingrat affords such a lesson, that we propose presenting it to the reader.

In the year 1822, a young priest bearing the above appellation, was inducted into the cure of a small village called St. Quentin, situated on the borders of Piedmont. He was about eight-and-twenty years of age ; tall, stout, and gifted with uncommon bodily strength. But his countenance was not

## THE PRIEST OF ST. QUENTIN

pleasing ; his complexion was so  
malicious, his smile treacherous ;  
it was said after the events we  
detail had occurred, 'when people  
to vindicate their own discern-  
earliness of their adverse impre-  
was, moreover, a rigid pastor ; 2  
much ; reproving harshly, infli-  
penances, and magnifying small  
great sins. He forbade his pa-  
sorts of innocent pleasures as str-  
chievous ones, and dancing and s  
as much proscribed at St. Quenti-  
and gambling. The fact was,  
'tremely ambitious, and, not poss-  
qualities that were likely to reco-  
to the notice of his superiors, he  
win their favour by his burni-  
exemplary rigour.

It may be easily conceived that  
Mingrat was not much beloved  
but at that period the Church was

ful, and out of Paris no one dared to raise his voice against her members, so that whatever may have been thought, except in confidential whispers, no murmurs were heard against the pastor of St. Quentin.

About a quarter of an hour's walk from the church there resided a retired soldier, named Stephen Charnelot, with his beautiful wife Marie Guérin. He was the possessor of a small bit of land, and passed his days in peace and contentment with Marie, who was as pious and prudent as she was beautiful. Her only fault was, that where religion was concerned, she did not allow herself the exercise of her judgment; her piety amounted to fanaticism, and every priest, in her eyes, was a saint. Antoine Mingrat was her confessor, and the pastor of her parish; and it is not to be doubted that her extraordinary beauty had inspired him with a criminal passion, although we have neither witnesses nor proofs to establish the fact, the evidence

in this case being purely circumstantial, though of a very decisive, as well as singular character.

On the 8th of May, 1822, several young persons in the adjoining parish of Veuray were to receive their first communion, and Marie, who was a constant attendant at all the religious festivals in the neighbourhood, announced her intention of being present. Mingrat, hearing of this, made it the pretext of a visit to her. He had a letter for the minister there, which he requested her to take charge of. He had not, however, brought it with him, but promised to have it ready by the evening when she came to confession. On the same afternoon she was seen to leave the village for this purpose, having requested her friends, when her husband came home, to tell him whither she was gone. Poor Marie never returned to her happy home, and, after one other momentary glimpse of her, we see her alive no more.

We learn from Madame St. Michel, a lady of great respectability, who happened to be at her devotions in the Church of St. Quentin, about five o'clock on that afternoon, that she saw Marie Charnelot enter and throw herself on her knees before the confessional, whilst at the same moment she perceived a strange figure in black, apparently without either arms or legs, and with some singular headgear, glide behind the altar. Alarmed at the phantom, she tried to draw Marie's attention to it; but the latter was too deeply absorbed in her devotions to heed her; and when Madame St. Michel looked again the spectre had disappeared. The circumstance seems, however, to have so far terrified the old lady, that she immediately quitted the church. There can be no doubt that the phantom was Mingrat, though the motive of his assuming the disguise does not appear; neither do we know what further occurred in the church, except that she must have been

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induced to accompany him to his house, which was close at hand, probably for the purpose of receiving the letter for the minister of Veuray. No one, however, saw her enter. The priest kept but one maid, a simple, honest, young creature, who was also very devout, and standing in great awe of her master.

The first indications we gather that a crime had been committed, are from the evidence of this girl, extracted from her, for reasons which will be hereafter explained, with great difficulty. Somewhere betwixt the hour of five and the closing in of the evening, she thought she heard suppressed sighs proceeding from a back room of the parsonage, but these sounds she did not investigate further. Later, came the sacristan, to ask if he should ring in the mass for the dead, and then the girl knocked at the door of the parlour where she supposed her master to be, in order to make the inquiry. There

being no answer, she ascended the stairs to his chamber, where at first she was not more successful, although she heard heavy sighs from within, as of one very sick or in the agonies of death. She tried to lift the latch, but the door was fast, and, alarmed, she knocked vehemently. Then the priest spoke, and in a loud voice bade her go below and he would follow her immediately. She went, but she had scarcely reached the bottom of the stairs when he appeared at the top, inquiring who wanted him. On learning what the sacristan sought, he answered decidedly *no* ; and then retreating into his chamber, closed the door behind him.

There was something in this that seems to have awakened the girl's curiosity as well as her fears, so she crept softly up the stairs and listened at the door—she heard still the sighs and groans—then there was a shaking of the bed—then the groans ceased, and there was silence. Pale and trembling she went below.



By-and-by the priest came down, evidently much disturbed. She told him she had been frightened ; she thought he had been dying in the chamber above. He bade her hold her tongue, called her a fool, and ordered her to take the newspaper to Monsieur Huddard, with his compliments. But curiosity was stronger than obedience. She took the paper, but instead of going to the neighbour's with it, she went round the church and came again to the portal. She could now hear nothing ; but she saw a light in the upper room, and tried to climb to the window ; but she could not do this without making some noise—instantly the light was extinguished, and she heard the priest descending the stairs. Presently he opened the door, and stepping out cried : “ Who's there ? ” He had called several times before she had courage to speak ; at length she answered, trembling : “ It is I.”

"What are you doing there?" he asked, in an angry tone.

"I was going to shut the door of the hen-coop," she replied.

"That's false!" said he. "You were here for some other purpose."

She then returned into the kitchen to prepare the supper. When it was ready he seated himself, but he scarcely touched a morsel. After a few minutes, he started from the table, and bade her now convey the paper to Huddard. This time, she went. When she returned, he conversed with her for some minutes, betraying, however, great inquietude. Then he ascended the stairs again, and shut himself into the mysterious chamber. The girl remained below, oppressed with fear and anxiety; what could be going on above? She took a book of devotion and tried to calm her mind by reading it; but in vain—she could not collect

her thoughts. Suddenly she was startled by a violent knocking at the door, but before she could reach it, the priest came down, and thrusting her aside, opened it himself. It was Charnelot, come to inquire for his wife; she had left home, saying she was going to confession, but had not returned. Mingrat had his answer ready. He said that he had seen her in the church, but that displeased with the unsuitableness of her attire, he had sent her home again. Nevertheless, his speech was not calm; he stammered and spoke thick; but no suspicion of the truth seems to have entered the husband's mind. He retired; and Mingrat, saying he would remove the supper things himself, sent away the maid, who did not sleep in the house, and then commenced the labours of that most awful night.

Not far from the church was an ascent, on the summit of which rose a wall of huge strangely-formed rock; at the foot of this

cliff flowed the river Isère. Mingrat's object appears to have been to convey the body of his victim thither, and throw it into the stream. With this view, he bound it hand and foot with cords, and let it down from the window; then he extinguished the light, and, descending himself by the stairs, he lifted it, and, partly by carrying and partly by dragging, he succeeded in conveying it to the top of the hill; but here he found a difficulty he had not reckoned on; great as was his strength, he could not raise the body over the rock.

This was an alarming discovery, for the night was short where there was so much to be done. It then occurred to him, that if he could separate the limbs from the trunk, he might more easily dispose of it; and he attempted this by means of his pocket-knife, and by some others which we will not detail; but all were inadequate.

And now imagine his situation! Let us

picture to ourselves the murderer as he stood on that lonely hill, scantily sprinkled with thorn-bushes and withered hazel-trees ; battered by the storm, for the rain fell and the wind raged furiously on that awful night : before him, the steep ascent that he could not surmount ; beside him, the body that he could not get rid of ! Conceive his horror, his anguish, his despair ! How little do we think, when each night we lay our heads calmly on our pillows, of the scenes that at that moment may be acting in different parts of the world ! For myself, I could not, on hearing this fearful story, help endeavouring to recall the fearful drama ; bringing back to my memory that May of 1822 ; contrasting situations—my peaceful chamber, my calm sleep, and my cheerful waking. I felt ready to fall upon my knees, and bless God that I had been exempted from such trials. Indeed, it is the melting of the heart that this tale produced on myself that has induced

me to relate it ; for such contemplations are very wholesome. Trembling whilst we rejoice, we learn the inestimable value of innocence ; and whilst humbly thankful for the past, we prepare to encounter the future, at once softened and strengthened, encouraged and reproved.

But to return to that lonely hill and the conflict there. What was to be done ? He must either carry the body round to the river by the public path, or return home and fetch a more efficient instrument. The time that either operation would absorb was terrific to think of. At length, he decided on the latter expedient, probably from the apprehension that passengers would be abroad upon the road before he could accomplish his task. So with rapid strides he made his way back to the manse, possessed himself of the kitchen hatchet, and returned to the hill. With the aid of this weapon he attained his object, and then succeeded in conveying the

mangled remains to the river ; leaving, as he believed, no traces of his own whereabouts, or of his victim's fate, except a handkerchief she had worn about her neck. This he hung on a thorn-bush near the water, in order to encourage the idea that she had destroyed herself.

The morning now began to dawn, but his night's work was scarcely half finished. How much must be done before the maid returned ! There were the murdered woman's clothes to be disposed of ; his own blood-besprinkled habiliments to be cleaned ; the hatchet to be polished. It was a sore labour, for still, toil as he would, some spot, some stain remained ! Her dress he burned, cutting it up into shreds, and then cutting again to make them small enough for hasty combustion ; but the very ashes were treacherous, and cried aloud against him. They were so red that he was obliged to mingle sand and earth amongst them to disguise

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the colour. As for the hatchet, in his anguish he rubbed it so bright that its very lustre stood out as a testimony against him. It is surely one of the providences of God, that the stains of blood should be so difficult to efface !

But suddenly he pauses—his whole frame is relaxed—his visage, inflamed by the torture of his mind and his vehement labours, is overspread with a ghastly pallor—what is it that affrights him so ? Is there a noise without, or has he discerned some human eye watching him through an unguarded chink ? Why does he fling down the hatchet, and thrust his hands wildly into his pockets, and then rush frantically from the house ? *He has missed his pocket knife !* He must have left it behind him on the hill. Oh, the agony of that moment ! Away he strides again, this time in the broad light of day—but everything must be risked to recover such a damning evidence. He reaches the



summit—seeks it—looks here, looks there—under every bush, in every cleft—runs hither, thither—but in vain; the knife has disappeared. He dare linger no longer—he must return without it.

He reached the parsonage before the maid's arrival, and had it not been for her fanatical faith in his holy office, his demeanour must now have betrayed him. He met her now with confusion; addressed her with fury—"Where had she been? What had she seen? What did she think?" The poor girl, trembling, answered that she had seen nothing, understood nothing. She had only heard a sighing and groaning, and she fancied that her master was ill. He looked hard at her, uttered fearful threats that she could not comprehend, and commanded her to be silent on the peril of her life. So he left her and shut himself up in his chamber.

The girl seems at this crisis to have

suffered a severe conflict betwixt her uncertainty, terror, and amazement on the one hand ; and her sense of duty and allegiance to her master, together with her respect for his priesthood, and humble reverence for his office, on the other. That he, the ordained minister of God, the director of her soul, the keeper of her conscience—he who had authority to absolve her sins, and lend her wings for heaven—that he should do wrong, seemed so strange, so impossible !

Nevertheless, she could not close her eyes to what she saw ; why was the kitchen hearth heaped with ashes ? There must surely have been a large fire since she had last been there ! She swept them aside, and there appeared a half-burned wreath of flowers ; in the back yard, upon some straw, she perceived blood spots, and picked up a withered leaf of hazel ; there were no hazel-trees there, and the leaf was stained, and there was something adhering to it that made

her own blood freeze. She found a bit of the minister's cloak, too, and that was stained. What should she do? What ought she to do? She resolved she would leave him, and tell him of her determination immediately; then, be this fearful mystery what it might, she was free of it. So she turned to seek him, expecting to find him in his chamber or reading his breviary in the parlour, but she no sooner opened the kitchen door than he stood before her, more wild, more gloomy than before. When she saw him she durst not open her lips to speak, and was about to retreat when he sternly bade her go up stairs. This harshness rendered her desperate, and folding her hands, as in earnest prayer, she besought him to "let her go away, for she could bear it no longer."

What a thunderclap to Mingrat! The request told all. He was betrayed; his fatal secret, his life, his honour, were in the power

of this girl. He could not kill *her* too—the burthen of the blood he had spilt was too heavy upon him. That fearful night had already made another man of him. If the expression of his features had been before unpleasing, it had now become frightful; the anguish of his soul was imprinted on his countenance. His complexion, formerly sallow, was now purple, and that not on this day alone, but for the remaining eight days of his agony it continued so. His eyes stared wildly, his step was uncertain, he stammered in his speech, and could never sufficiently command himself to perform any office of the Church with decent composure.

Shaking like a leaf, the girl stood before him; whilst he, barring her way to the door, and holding her arm with a grasp of iron, his eyes fixed on the earth, deliberated what was to be done. Suddenly a resource presents itself. He is acquainted with her simplicity and scrupulous conscience, and hope awakes

once more. Still grasping her arm, he dragged her to the church—it was yet early morning, and no one was there to witness the scene—flung her on the steps of the altar, and gave her the choice at once to die or there swear to observe an inviolable secrecy on the events of that night. She consented to take the oath, and he held the crucifix upon her lips whilst she pronounced it.

The poor young creature seems to have thought that in making this vow she not only bound herself to silence, but also to the abstaining from every act which could possibly tend to the betrayal of her master. On this account she believed it to be her duty to remain with him. She therefore returned to the manse, and resumed her service, endeavouring to the best of her power to conceal her terror and agitation.

In the meanwhile, the disappearance of the beautiful Marie Charnelot was beginning to excite general attention, and her husband natu-

rally became extremely uneasy. Her having been seen to enter the village of St. Quentin, conjoined to her avowed intention of going to confession, inevitably connected Antoine Mingrat with the mystery ; but the people of the neighbourhood were extremely pious ; however unloveable a being their pastor was, he was a holy one in their eyes ; and if any vague suspicions arose in their minds they sought to suppress them. But of the awful crime committed no suspicion did arise ; the only idea that seems to have occurred—and this only to a few young men—was the possibility of an improper intimacy betwixt the priest and Marie. Incited by curiosity, two or three had agreed to watch his house on the night she was first missed. They seemed to have arrived during the few minutes he was at home seeking the kitchen hatchet. Little thought he, when he issued from his door with the fatal weapon under his cloak, of the eyes that were peering upon him from the

angle of a neighbouring wall. They, however, seeing no one come out but himself, grew weary of the frolic, and the increasing storm drove them away.

It happened that very early on that morning, a gentleman, named Michon, had occasion to visit a part of his property which was situated at a little distance from the village. His way lay across the hill, and, although the day was but dawning, it was light enough for him to perceive that the ground was stained with newly-shed blood. He stopt; some animal might have fallen a prey to the eagles! But no; here were traces of human intervention. Near at hand lay a bloody cord; farther, stuck in the earth, a pocket-knife with a black handle bearing the same fatal marks. He picked it up; but, overcome with horror, flung it from him into a bush, and hastily left the place. Presently, however, recollecting how important this instrument would be to the conviction of the assassin,

whoever he might be, he returned, and buried it in the earth. Thus, when Mingrat went back to seek it, it was no longer to be found.

It was an hour or more after this, though still early morning, that a butcher and his son, on their way to St. Quentin, had occasion to pass under the cliff. "See there, father," said the boy, with some alarm, "what is that man doing upon the hill?" The butcher looked, and with surprise perceived it was Antoine Mingrat the priest. His gestures, too, amazed them, for themselves unseen, they saw him distinctly; his eye wandered in all directions—he ran hastily from place to place—now stooped staring into a bush—then, upon his knees, seemed to be peering into the earth—then stood erect and glared wildly about him—and at length, with a frantic gesture of despair, fled down the hill.

The unsuspected witnesses of so strange a



scene were naturally desirous of knowing what it meant ; so, when the priest was gone, they ascended the hill, and there found enough to convince them that some fearful crime had been committed ; but whether the agitation of Mingrat arose from his being a party to it, or merely from his horror at the discovery of it, time alone could disclose. Meanwhile, he was their pastor ; if he were innocent, he would know what to do better than they ; if guilty, it might be dangerous to meddle with him. So they kept their own counsel, and said nothing of what they had seen.

But the excitement of the public continued to increase. The anxious husband, seeking his wife in all directions, and visiting the neighbouring villages, spread the intelligence. Their inhabitants, eager to investigate the mystery, flocked into St. Quentin ; the hill was covered with people.

By this time Marie's handkerchief being

found upon the thorn-bush, and blood stains traced as far as the river, a warm discussion arose as to whether she had drowned herself, after unsuccessfully attempting some other mode of death, or whether she had fallen by the hand of another. Mingrat, who, for appearance sake, had been obliged to accompany some of her friends to the scene of the murder, and was the unwilling auditor of the dispute, evinced the most violent anguish ; wringing his hands and convulsively casting up his eyes to heaven. But man's eye as well as God's eye was upon him ; there was in his whole appearance and demeanour something so unnatural, that in spite of their superstitious reverence for the Church, they began to suspect him ; and now Michon came forward with the knife, and placed it in the hands of the magistrate. Charnelot declared it had not belonged to his wife. Was it the priest's ? Still fettered by their veneration, they durst not ask him the ques-

tion ; so under pretence of an ordinary visit, the adjunct or substitute called on him, and adroitly led the conversation to the subject which then formed the theme of inquiry. Mingrat as adroitly changed it ; the adjunct brought it back again to Marie ; Mingrat said he was suffering extremely from the state of his blood, which was much disordered ; and, indeed, at the moment he spoke, his visitor describes his face to have been almost black ; gradually, the adjunct spoke of the knife—he wondered that Marie should have had recourse to such a weapon ; Mingrat, sitting with his eyes fixed upon the table before him, requested the loan of a certain work on geometry which the adjunct possessed ; the latter promised it and took his leave, confirmed in his suspicions. He knew that the priest had a copy of the book in his own library.

Meanwhile an aunt of Mingrat's, who had been absent on a journey, arrived at St.

Quentin, and learned the fatal rumour. Alarmed, she took the opportunity of the adjunct's visit to her nephew to call on his wife, and turning the conversation on the murder, she requested to see the knife ; the lady produced it. For some moments the poor woman remained motionless, staring at it with a fixed gaze of horror, then clasping her hands, she murmured, with quivering lips : "That then is the instrument of this dreadful crime !" Unable to utter another syllable, she rose and quitted the house.

Scarcely had the adjunct reached home when Mingrat himself arrived, under the pretext of fetching the book he wanted ; his real motive was supposed to be a faint hope of possessing himself of the knife. His conversation was confused and unconnected, whilst his eye wandered anxiously over the room. This visit produced a very unfavourable impression against him ; but still, always considering his office, there was

nothing that in the magistrate's opinion authorized him to lay hands on the priest. It was not till the remains of the poor victim were found in the river, by some boys who were fishing on its banks, that the higher authorities interfered, and despatched some *gensd'armes* to his house to keep him under *surveillance*. Mingrat now exerted himself to the utmost to appear composed, and to perform the various offices of the Church, from which, under the pretext of indisposition, he had since the murder excused himself; but his frightful complexion, his features distorted by anguish, and the blundering manner in which he stumbled through what was so familiar to him, only confirmed the now universal persuasion.

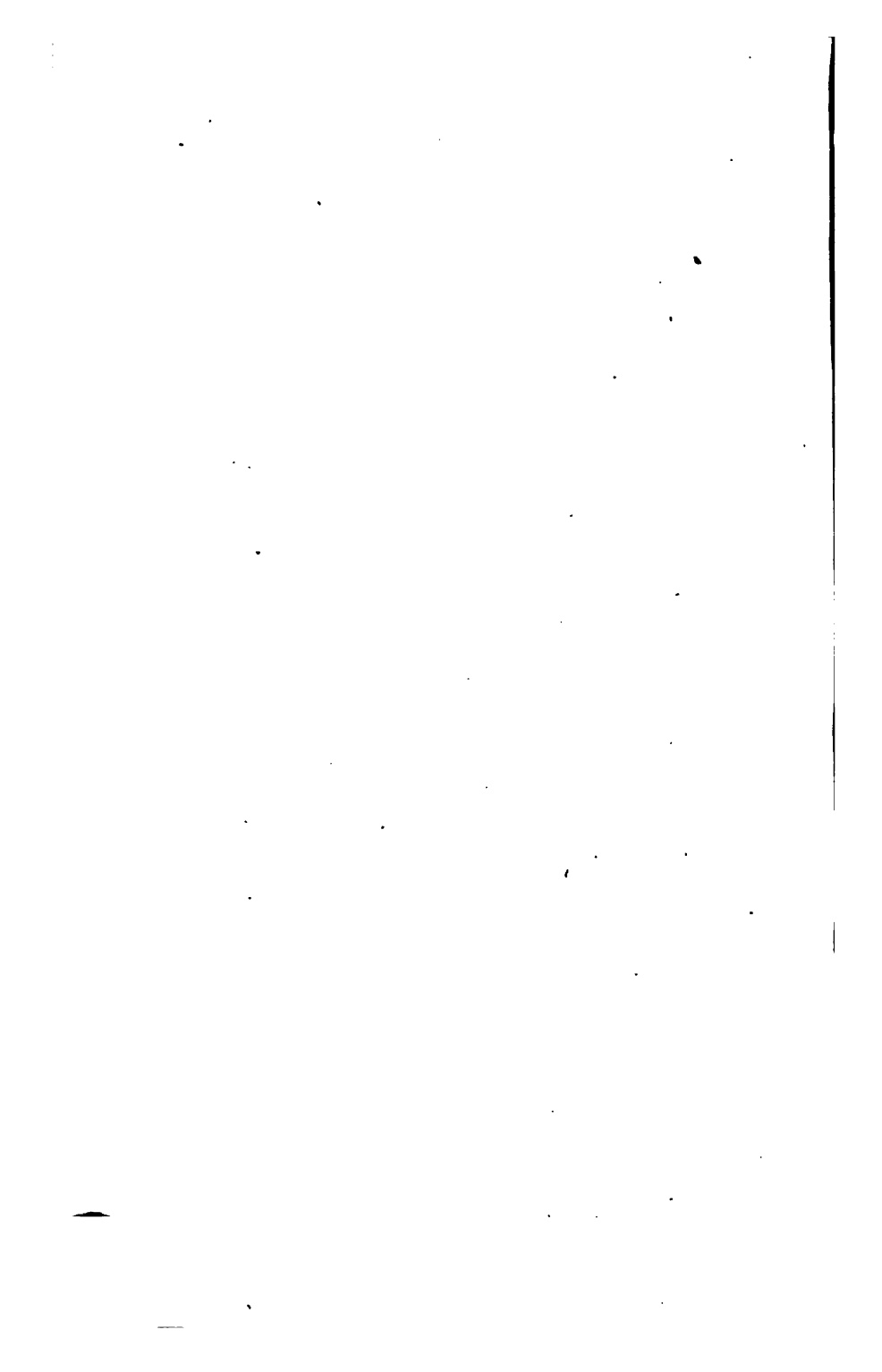
It was on the eighth day after the death of Marie Charnelot, whilst the *gensd'armes* were at table, that a stranger, evidently a priest, entered the room, and placing a letter

in Mingrat's hands, desired him instantly to read it, and then disappeared. The letter contained the following words : " You are covered with infamy by the rumours which connect you with that murdered woman. If you are guilty, fly instantly !" The priest was the Vicar of Toulon. Antoine Mingrat followed this advice ; intentionally or otherwise, the gensd'armes allowed him to escape, and he fled across the mountains into Piedmont. The aunt also disappeared. It was with much difficulty that the poor maid was brought to confess what she knew ; her vow weighed heavily upon her ; and it was only under the influence of another confessor that she at length gave her evidence.

The guilt of Mingrat was now established, but he was beyond the reach of the law. The bereaved husband and a brother of Marie's went to Paris, and throwing themselves at the King's feet, demanded that the

criminal should be required of the Sardinian Government. But there were difficulties in the way of their satisfaction ; Mingrat was, however, seized and thrown into prison at Chambéry. But the family and friends still thirsted for vengeance, and the process was continued till, at length, in 1828, the assassin was formally demanded of the Piedmontese. But this requisition only resulted in his removal to the strong fortress of Fenestrelle, from whence, it is supposed, he was transferred to a penitentiary. May he repent !

To this hour, the inhabitants of St. Quentin and its neighbourhood look with terror on the scene of this dreadful tragedy, never passing over the hill by night, and as rarely as they can by day.





## IV.

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### ANTOINE DE CHAULIEU'S WEDDING-DAY.

ANTOINE DE CHAULIEU was the son of a poor gentleman of Normandy, with a long genealogy, a short rent-roll, and a large family. Jacques Rollet was the son of a brewer, who did not know who his grandfather was ; but he had a long purse, and only two children. As these youths flourished in the early days of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and were near neighbours, they natu-

rally hated each other. Their enmity commenced at school, where the delicate and refined De Chaulieu being the only *gentilhomme* amongst the scholars, was the favourite of the master (who was a bit of an aristocrat in his heart), although he was about the worst dressed boy in the establishment, and never had a sou to spend; whilst Jacques Rollet, sturdy and rough, with smart clothes and plenty of money, got flogged six days in the week, ostensibly for being stupid, and not learning his lessons—which, indeed, he did not—but, in reality, for constantly quarrelling with and insulting De Chaulieu, who had not strength to cope with him. When they left the academy, the feud continued in all its vigour, and was fostered by a thousand little circumstances, arising out of the state of the times, till a separation ensued, in consequence of an aunt of Antoine de Chaulieu's undertaking the expense of sending him to Paris to study

the law, and of maintaining him there during the necessary period.

With the progress of events, came some degree of reaction in favour of birth and nobility, and then Antoine, who had passed for the Bar, began to hold up his head, and endeavoured to push his fortunes ; but fate seemed against him. He felt certain that if he possessed any gift in the world, it was that of eloquence, but he could get no cause to plead ; and his aunt dying inopportunately, first his resources failed, and then his health. He had no sooner returned to his home, than, to complicate his difficulties completely, he fell in love with Mademoiselle Natalie de Bellefonds, who had just returned from Paris, where she had been completing her education. To expatiate on the perfections of Mademoiselle Natalie, would be a waste of ink and paper ; it is sufficient to say, that she really was a very charming girl, with a fortune which, though not large, would

have been a most desirable acquisition to De Chaulieu, who had nothing. Neither was the fair Natalie indisposed to listen to his addresses; but her father could not be expected to countenance the suit of a gentleman, however well-born, who had not a ten-sous piece in the world, and whose prospects were a blank.

Whilst the ambitious and love-sick young barrister was thus pining in unwelcome obscurity, his old acquaintance, Jacques Rollet, had been acquiring an undesirable notoriety. There was nothing really bad in Jacques' disposition, but having been bred up a democrat, with a hatred of the nobility, he could not easily accommodate his rough humour to treat them with civility when it was no longer safe to insult them. The liberties he allowed himself whenever circumstances brought him into contact with the higher classes of society, had led him into many scrapes, out of which his father's

money had one way or another released him ; but that source of safety had now failed. Old Rollet having been too busy with the affairs of the nation to attend to his business, had died insolvent, leaving his son with nothing but his own wits to help him out of future difficulties, and it was not long before their exercise was called for. Claudine Rollet, his sister, who was a very pretty girl, had attracted the attention of Mademoiselle de Bellefonds' brother, Alphonso; and as he paid her more attention than from such a quarter was agreeable to Jacques, the young men had had more than one quarrel on the subject, on which occasions they had each, characteristically, given vent to their enmity, the one in contemptuous monosyllables, and the other in a volley of insulting words. But Claudine had another lover more nearly of her own condition of life ; this was Claperon, the deputy-governor of the Rouen jail, with

whom she had made acquaintance during one or two compulsory visits paid by her brother to that functionary ; but Claudine, who was a bit of a coquette, though she did not altogether reject his suit, gave him little encouragement, so that betwixt hopes, and fears, and doubts, and jealousies, poor Claperon led a very uneasy kind of life.

Affairs had been for some time in this position, when, one fine morning, Alphonse de Bellefonds was not to be found in his chamber when his servant went to call him ; neither had his bed been slept in. He had been observed to go out rather late on the preceding evening, but whether or not he had returned, nobody could tell. He had not appeared at supper, but that was too ordinary an event to awaken suspicion ; and little alarm was excited till several hours had elapsed, when inquiries were instituted and a search commenced, which terminated in the

discovery of his body, a good deal mangled, lying at the bottom of a pond which had belonged to the old brewery.

Before any investigations had been made, every person had jumped to the conclusion that the young man had been murdered, and that Jacques Rollet was the assassin. There was a strong presumption in favour of that opinion, which further perquisitions tended to confirm. Only the day before, Jacques had been heard to threaten Monsieur de Bellefonds with speedy vengeance. On the fatal evening, Alphonse and Claudine had been seen together in the neighbourhood of the now dismantled brewery ; and as Jacques, betwixt poverty and democracy, was in bad odour with the prudent and respectable part of society, it was not easy for him to bring witnesses to character, or prove an unexceptionable *alibi*. As for the Bellefonds and De Chaulieus, and the aristocracy in general, they entertained no doubt of his guilt ; and finally, the

magistrates coming to the same opinion, Jacques Rollet was committed for trial at the next assizes, and as a testimony of goodwill, Antoine de Chaulieu was selected by the injured family to conduct the prosecution.

Here, at last, was the opportunity he had sighed for ! So interesting a case, too, furnishing such ample occasion for passion, pathos, indignation ! And how eminently fortunate that the speech which he set himself with ardour to prepare, would be delivered in the presence of the father and brother of his mistress, and perhaps of the lady herself ! The evidence against Jacques, it is true, was altogether presumptive ; there was no proof whatever that he had committed the crime ; and for his own part he stoutly denied it. But Antoine de Chaulieu entertained no doubt of his guilt, and the speech he composed was certainly well calculated to carry that conviction into the



bosom of others. It was of the highest importance to his own reputation that he should procure a verdict, and he confidently assured the afflicted and enraged family of the victim that their vengeance should be satisfied. Under these circumstances, could anything be more unwelcome than a piece of intelligence that was privately conveyed to him late on the evening before the trial was to come on, which tended strongly to exculpate the prisoner, without indicating any other person as the criminal! Here was an opportunity lost! The first step of the ladder on which he was to rise to fame, fortune, and a wife, was slipping from under his feet!

Of course, so interesting a trial was anticipated with great eagerness by the public, the court was crowded with all the beauty and fashion of Rouen, and amongst the rest, doubly interesting in her mourning, sat the fair Natalie, accompanied by her

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family. The young advocate's heart beat high ; he felt himself inspired by the occasion ; and although Jacques Rollet persisted in asserting his innocence, founding his defence chiefly on circumstances which were strongly corroborated by the information that had reached De Chaulieu the preceding evening, — he was nevertheless convicted.

In spite of the very strong doubts he privately entertained respecting the justice of the verdict, even De Chaulieu himself, in the first flush of success, amidst a crowd of congratulating friends, and the approving smiles of his mistress, felt gratified and happy ; his speech had, for the time being, not only convinced others, but himself : warmed with his own eloquence, he believed what he said. But when the glow was over, and he found himself alone, he did not feel so comfortable. A latent doubt of Rollet's guilt now prest strongly on his mind, and he felt that the blood of the innocent would be on his head.

It is true there was yet time to save the life of the prisoner, but to admit Jacques innocent, was to take the glory out of his own speech, and turn the sting of his argument against himself. Besides, if he produced the witness who had secretly given him the information, he should be self-condemned, for he could not conceal that he had been aware of the circumstance before the trial.

Matters having gone so far, therefore, it was necessary that Jacques Rollet should die; so the affair took its course; and early one morning the guillotine was erected in the court-yard of the gaol, three criminals ascended the scaffold, and three heads fell into the basket, which were presently afterwards, with the trunks that had been attached to them, buried in a corner of the cemetery.

Antoine de Chaulieu was now fairly started in his career, and his success was as rapid as the first step towards it had been tardy. He took a pretty apartment in the Hôtel Mar-

bœuf, Rue Grange-Batelière, and in a short time was looked upon as one of the most rising young advocates in Paris. His success in one line brought him success in another ; he was soon a favourite in society, and an object of interest to speculating mothers ; but his affections, still adhered to his old love, Natalie de Bellefonds, whose family now gave their assent to the match—at least prospectively—a circumstance which furnished such an additional incentive to his exertions, that in about two years from the date of his first brilliant speech, he was in a sufficiently flourishing condition to offer the young lady a suitable home. In anticipation of the happy event, he engaged and furnished a suite of apartments in the Rue du Helder ; and, as it was necessary that the bride should come to Paris to provide her trousseau, it was agreed that the wedding should take place there, instead of at Bellefonds', as had been first projected, an arrangement the more desirable,

that a press of business rendered Monsieur de Chaulieu's absence from Paris inconvenient.

Brides and bridegrooms in France, except of the very high classes, are not much in the habit of making those honeymoon excursions so universal in this country. A day spent in visiting Versailles, or St. Cloud, or even the public places of the city, is generally all that precedes the settling down into the habits of daily life. In the present instance, St. Denis was selected, from the circumstance of Natalie's having a younger sister at school there, and also because she had a particular desire to see the Abbey.

The wedding was to take place on a Thursday ; and on the Wednesday evening, having spent some hours most agreeably with Natalie, Antoine de Chaulieu returned to spend his last night in his bachelor apartments. His wardrobe and other small possessions had already been packed up, and sent to his future home ; and there was nothing left in

his room now, but his new wedding suit, which he inspected with considerable satisfaction before he undressed and lay down to sleep. Sleep, however, was somewhat slow to visit him, and the clock had struck one before he closed his eyes. When he opened them again, it was broad daylight; and his first thought was, had he overslept himself? He sat up in bed to look at the clock, which was exactly opposite; and as he did so, in the large mirror over the fireplace, he perceived a figure standing behind him. As the dilated eyes met his own, he saw it was the face of Jacques Rollet. Overcome with horror, he sank back on his pillow, and it was some minutes before he ventured to look again in that direction; when he did so, the figure had disappeared.

The sudden revulsion of feeling such a vision was calculated to occasion in a man elate with joy, may be conceived! For some time after the death of his former foe, he had

been visited by not unfrequent twinges of conscience ; but of late, borne along by success, and the hurry of Parisian life, these unpleasant remembrances had grown rarer, till at length they had faded away altogether. Nothing had been further from his thoughts than Jacques Rollet, when he closed his eyes on the preceding night, nor when he opened them to that sun which was to shine on what he expected to be the happiest day of his life ! Where were the high-strung nerves now ! the elastic frame ! the bounding heart !

Heavily and slowly he arose from his bed, for it was time to do so ; and with a trembling hand and quivering knees, he went through the processes of the toilet, gashing his cheek with the razor, and spilling the water over his well-polished boots. When he was dressed, scarcely venturing to cast a glance in the mirror as he passed it, he quitted the room, and descended the stairs,

taking the key of the door with him, for the purpose of leaving it with the porter ; the man, however, being absent, he laid it on the table in his lodge, and with a relaxed and languid step he proceeded to the carriage, which quickly conveyed him to the church, where he was met by Natalie and her friends. How difficult it was now to look happy, with that pallid face and extinguished eye !

“ How pale you are ! Has anything happened ? You are surely ill ? ” were the exclamations that assailed him on all sides. He tried to carry the thing off as well as he could, but he felt that the movements he would have wished to appear alert were only convulsive, and that the smiles with which he attempted to relax his features were but distorted grimaces. However, the church was not the place for further inquiries ; and whilst Natalie gently pressed his hand in token of sympathy, they advanced to the altar, and the ceremony was performed ;



after which, they stepped into the carriages waiting at the door, and drove to the apartments of Madame de Bellefonds, where an elegant *déjeuner* was prepared.

"What ails you, my dear husband?" inquired Natalie, as soon as they were alone.

"Nothing, love," he replied; "nothing, I assure you, but a restless night and a little overwork, in order that I might have to-day free to enjoy my happiness!"

"Are you quite sure? Is there nothing else?"

"Nothing, indeed; and pray don't take notice of it: it only makes me worse!"

Natalie was not deceived, but she saw that what he said was true—notice made him worse; so she contented herself with observing him quietly, and saying nothing; but, as he *felt* she was observing him, she might

almost better have spoken ; words are often less embarrassing things than too curious eyes.

When they reached Madame de Bellefonds' he had the same sort of questioning and scrutiny to undergo, till he grew quite impatient under it, and betrayed a degree of temper altogether unusual with him. Then everybody looked astonished ; some whispered their remarks, and others expressed them by their wondering eyes, till his brow knit, and his pallid cheeks became flushed with anger. Neither could he divert attention by eating ; his parched mouth would not allow him to swallow anything but liquids, of which, however, he indulged in copious libations ; and it was an exceeding relief to him when the carriage which was to convey them to St. Denis, being announced, furnished an excuse for hastily leaving the table. Looking at his watch he declared it was late ; and

Natalie, who saw how eager he was to be gone, threw her shawl over her shoulders, and bidding her friends *good morning*, they hurried away.

It was a fine sunny day in June ; and as they drove along the crowded boulevards, and through the Porte St. Denis, the young bride and bridegroom, to avoid each other's eyes, affected to be gazing out of the windows ; but when they reached that part of the road where there was nothing but trees on each side, they felt it necessary to draw in their heads, and make an attempt at conversation.

De Chaulieu put his arm round his wife's waist, and tried to rouse himself from his depression ; but it had by this time so reacted upon her, that she could not respond to his efforts ; and thus the conversation languished, till both felt glad when they reached their destination, which would, at

all events, furnish them something to talk about.

Having quitted the carriage, and ordered a dinner at the Hôtel de l'Abbaye, the young couple proceeded to visit Mademoiselle Hortense de Bellefonds, who was overjoyed to see her sister and new brother-in-law, and doubly so when she found that they had obtained permission to take her out to spend the afternoon with them. As there is little to be seen at St. Denis but the Abbey, on quitting that part of it devoted to education, they proceeded to visit the church, with its various objects of interest; and as De Chaulieu's thoughts were now forced into another direction, his cheerfulness began insensibly to return. Natalie looked so beautiful, too, and the affection betwixt the two young sisters was so pleasant to behold! And they spent a couple of hours wandering about with Hortense, who was almost as well informed

as the Suisse, till the brazen doors were open which admitted them to the Royal vault. Satisfied, at length, with what they had seen, they began to think of returning to the inn, the more especially as De Chaulieu, who had not eaten a morsel of food since the previous evening, confessed to being hungry ; so they directed their steps to the door, lingering here and there as they went, to inspect a monument or a painting, when, happening to turn his head aside to see if his wife, who had stopt to take a last look at the tomb of King Dagobert, was following, he beheld with horror the face of Jacques Rollet appearing from behind a column ! At the same instant, his wife joined him, and took his arm, inquiring if he was not very much delighted with what he had seen. He attempted to say yes, but the word died on his lips ; and staggering out of the door, he alleged that a sudden faintness had overcome him.

They conducted him to the Hôtel, but Natalie now became seriously alarmed ; and well she might. His complexion looked ghastly, his limbs shook, and his features bore an expression of indescribable horror and anguish. What could be the meaning of so extraordinary a change in the gay, witty, prosperous De Chaulieu, who, till that morning, seemed not to have a care in the world ? For, plead illness as he might, she felt certain, from the expression of his features, that his sufferings were not of the body but of the mind ; and unable to imagine any reason for such extraordinary manifestations, of which she had never before seen a symptom, but a sudden aversion to herself, and regret for the step he had taken, her pride took the alarm, and, concealing the distress she really felt, she began to assume a haughty and reserved manner towards him, which he naturally interpreted into an evidence of

anger and contempt. The dinner was placed upon the table, but De Chaulieu's appetite of which he had lately boasted, was quite gone, nor was his wife better able to eat. The young sister alone did justice to the repast; but although the bridegroom could not eat, he could swallow champagne in such copious draughts, that ere long the terror and remorse that the apparition of Jacques Rollet had awakened in his breast were drowned in intoxication. Amazed and indignant, poor Natalie sat silently observing this elect of her heart, till overcome with disappointment and grief, she quitted the room, with her sister, and retired to another apartment, where she gave free vent to her feelings in tears.

After passing a couple of hours in confidences and lamentations, they recollected that the hours of liberty, granted as an especial favour to Mademoiselle Hortense, had ex-

pired: but ashamed to exhibit her husband in his present condition to the eyes of strangers, Natalie prepared to re-conduct her to the *Maison Royale* herself. Looking into the dining-room as they passed, they saw De Chaulieu lying on a sofa fast asleep, in which state he continued when his wife returned. At length, however, the driver of their carriage begged to know if Monsieur and Madame were ready to return to Paris, and it became necessary to arouse him.

The transitory effects of the champagne had now subsided; but when De Chaulieu recollected what had happened, nothing could exceed his shame and mortification. So engrossing indeed were these sensations that they quite overpowered his previous ones, and, in his present vexation, he, for the moment, forgot his fears. He knelt at his wife's feet, begged her pardon a thousand



times, swore that he adored her, and declared that the illness and the effect of the wine had been purely the consequences of fasting and over-work. It was not the easiest thing in the world to reassure a woman whose pride, affection, and taste, had been so severely wounded; but Natalie tried to believe, or to appear to do so, and a sort of reconciliation ensued, not quite sincere on the part of the wife, and very humbling on the part of the husband. Under these circumstances it was impossible that he should recover his spirits or facility of manner; his gaiety was forced, his tenderness constrained; his heart was heavy within him; and ever and anon the source whence all this disappointment and woe had sprung would recur to his perplexed and tortured mind.

Thus mutually pained and distrustful, they returned to Paris, which they reached about

nine o'clock. In spite of her depression, Natalie, who had not seen her new apartments, felt some curiosity about them, whilst De Chaulieu anticipated a triumph in exhibiting the elegant home he had prepared for her. With some alacrity, therefore, they stepped out of the carriage, the gates of the Hôtel were thrown open, the *concierge* rang the bell which announced to the servants that their master and mistress had arrived, and whilst these domestics appeared above, holding lights over the balusters, Natalie, followed by her husband, ascended the stairs. But when they reached the landing-place of the first flight, they saw the figure of a man standing in a corner as if to make way for them; the flash from above fell upon his face, and again Antoine de Chaulieu recognised the features of Jacques Rollet!

From the circumstance of his wife's pre-

ceding him, the figure was not observed by De Chaulieu till he was lifting his foot to place it on the top stair: the sudden shock caused him to miss the step, and, without uttering a sound, he fell back, and never stopped till he reached the stones at the bottom. The screams of Natalie brought the *concierge* from below and the maids from above, and an attempt was made to raise the unfortunate man from the ground; but with cries of anguish he besought them to desist.

“Let me,” he said, “die here! O God! what a fearful vengeance is thine! Natalie, Natalie!” he exclaimed to his wife, who was kneeling beside him, “to win fame, and fortune, and yourself, I committed a dreadful crime! With lying words I argued away the life of a fellow-creature, whom, whilst I uttered them, I half believed to be innocent; and now, when I have attained all I desired, and reached

the summit of my hopes, the Almighty has sent him back upon the earth to blast me with the sight. Three times this day—three times this day! Again! again! again!”—and as he spoke, his wild and dilated eyes fixed themselves on one of the individuals that surrounded him.

“He is delirious,” said they.

“No!” said the stranger. “What he says is true enough—at least in part;” and, bending over the expiring man, he added: “May Heaven forgive you, Antoine de Chaulieu! I am no apparition, but the veritable Jacques Rollet, who was saved by one who well knew my innocence. I may name him, for he is beyond the reach of the law now: it was Claperon, the gaoler, who, in a fit of jealousy, had himself killed Alphonse de Bellefond.”

“But—but there were three!” gasped Antoine.

“Yes; a miserable idiot, who had been so

long in confinement for a murder that he was forgotten by the authorities, was substituted for me. Immediately after the execution, Claperon resigned his situation, and fled to America, and I have been a vagabond on the face of the earth ever since that time. At length I obtained, through the assistance of my sister, the situation of *concierge* in the Hôtel Marbœuf, in the Rue Grange-Batelière. I entered on my new place yesterday evening, and was desired to awaken the gentleman on the third floor at seven o'clock. When I entered the room to do so, you were asleep, but before I had time to speak you awoke, and I recognised your features in the glass. Knowing that I could not vindicate my innocence if you chose to seize me, I fled, and seeing an omnibus starting for St. Denis, I got on it with a vague idea of getting on to Calais, and crossing the Channel to England. But having only a franc or two in my pocket,

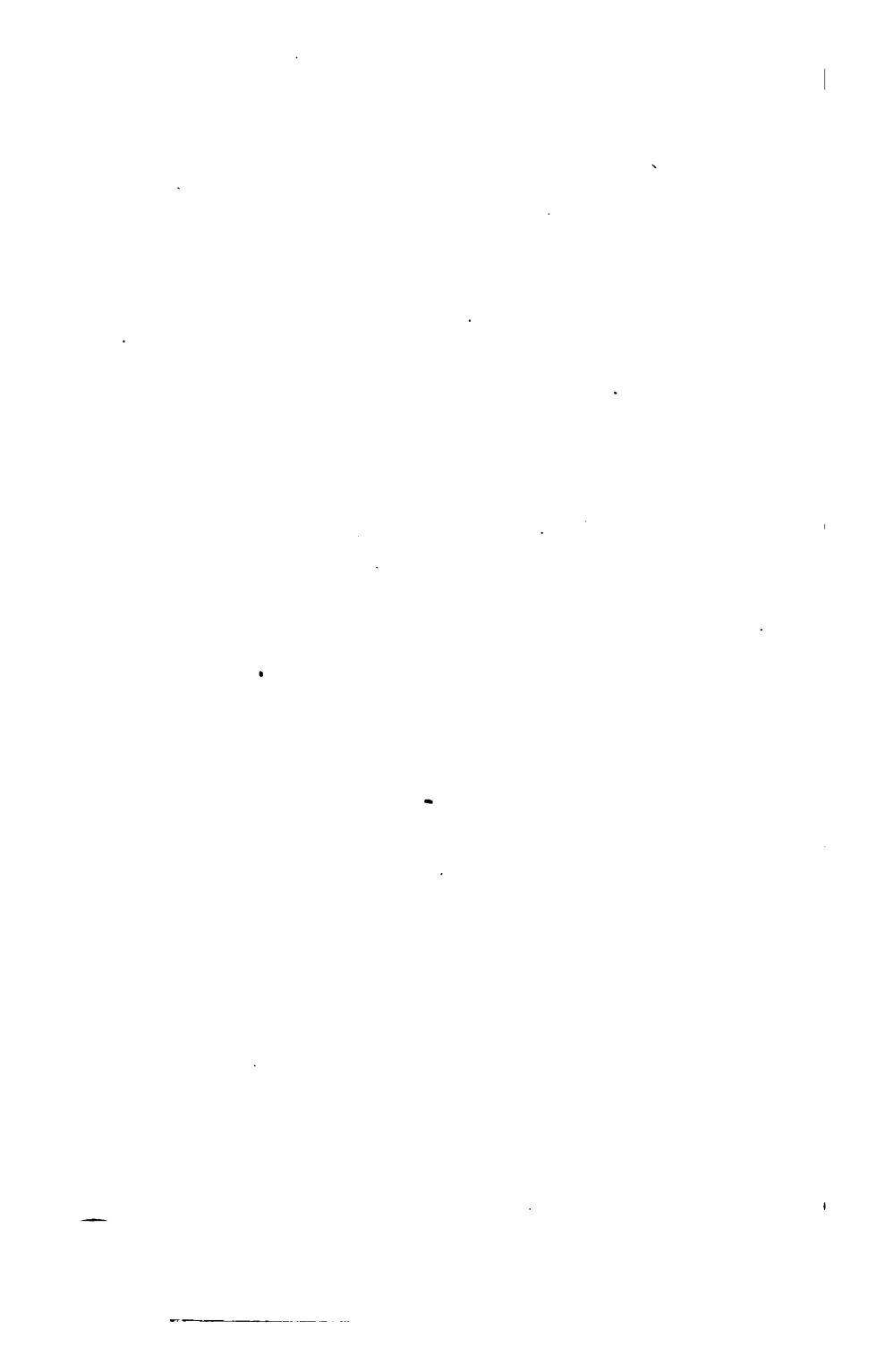
or, indeed, in the world, I did not know how to procure the means of going forward ; and whilst I was lounging about the place, forming first one plan, and then another, I saw you in the church, and, concluding you were in pursuit of me, I thought the best way of eluding your vigilance was to make my way back to Paris as fast as I could ; so I set off instantly, and walked all the way ; but having no money to pay my night's lodging, I came here to borrow a couple of livres of my sister Claudine, who is a *brodeuse*, and resides *au cinquième*."

"Thank Heaven !" exclaimed the dying man, "that sin is off my soul ! Natalie, dear wife, farewell ! Forgive, — forgive all !"

These were the last words he uttered ; the priest, who had been summoned in haste, held up the cross before his failing sight ; a few strong convulsions shook the poor

bruised and mangled frame, and then all was still.

And thus ended the Young Advocate's Wedding Day.





## V.

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# THE MONK'S STORY.

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## CHAPTER I.

ONE evening on which a merry Christmas party was assembled in an hospitable country mansion in the north of England, one of the company, a young man named Charles Lisle, called the host aside, as they were standing in the drawing-room before dinner, and whispered, "I say, Graham, I wish you'd put me into a room that has either a bolt or a key."

“They have all keys, or should have,” returned Mr. Graham.

“The key of my room is lost,” returned the other. “I asked the housemaid. It is always the first thing I look to when I enter a strange bed-chamber. I can’t sleep unless the door is locked.”

“How very odd! I never locked my door in my life,” said Mr. Graham. “I say, Letitia,” continued he, addressing his wife, “here’s Charlie Lisle can’t sleep unless his door’s locked, and the room you’ve put him into has no key.”

At this announcement all the ladies looked with surprise at Charlie Lisle, and all the gentlemen laughed; and “how odd!” and “what a strange fancy!” was echoed among them.

“I daresay you think it very odd, and indeed it must appear rather a lady-like particularity,” responded Lisle, who was a fine active young man, and did not look as if he

were much troubled with superfluous fears ; “but a circumstance that occurred to me when I was on the continent last summer has given me a nervous horror of sleeping in a room with an unlocked door, and I have never been able to overcome it. This is perhaps owing to my having been ill at the time, and I can scarcely say I have recovered from the effects of that illness yet.”

Naturally, everybody wanted to hear what this adventure was—the programme being certainly exciting—and so one of the visitors offered to exchange rooms with Charlie Lisle, provided he would tell them his story ; which accordingly, when assembled round the fire in the evening, he began in the following words :—

“ You must know, then, that last year, when I was wandering over the continent partly in search of the picturesque, and partly to remedy the effects of too much study, or

rather too hasty study—for I believe a man may study as much as he pleases, if he will only take it easy, as the Irish say—I was surprised one evening by a violent storm of hail, and it became so suddenly dark, that I could scarcely see my horse's head. I had twelve miles to go to the town at which I intended to pass the night, and I knew that there was no desirable shelter nearer, unless I chose to throw myself on the hospitality of the monastery of Pierre Châtel, which lay embosomed amongst the hills a little to the east of the road I was travelling. There is something romantic and interesting in a residence at a convent, but of that I need not now say anything. After a short mental debate, I resolved to present myself at the convent gate, and ask them to give me a night's shelter. So I turned off the road, and rang the heavy bell, which was answered by a burly, rosy-cheeked lay brother, and he

forthwith conducted me to the Prior, who was called the Père Jolivet. He received me very kindly, and we chatted away for some time on politics and the affairs of the world; and when the brothers were summoned to the refectory, I begged leave to join them, and share their simple repast, instead of eating the solitary supper prepared for me.

“ There were two tables in the hall, and I was seated next the Prior, in a situation that gave me a pretty good view of the whole company; and as I cast my eyes round to take a survey of the various countenances, they were suddenly arrested by one that struck me as about the most remarkable I had ever beheld. From the height of its owner as he sat, I judged he must be a very tall man, and the high round shoulders gave an idea of great physical strength; though at the same time the whole mass seemed composed of bone, for there was very little

muscle to cover it. The colour of his great coarse face was of an unnatural whiteness, and the rigid immobility of his features favoured the idea that the man was more dead than alive. There was altogether something so remarkable in his looks, that I could with difficulty turn my eyes from him. My fixed gaze, I imagine, roused some emotions within him, for he returned my scrutiny with a determined and terrific glare. If I forced myself to turn away my head for a moment, round it would come again, and there were his two great mysterious eyes upon me; and that stiff jaw, slowly and mechanically moving from side to side, as he ate his supper, like something acted on by a pendulum. It was really dreadful: we seemed both bewitched to stare at each other; and I longed for the signal to rise, that I might be released from the strange fascination. This came at length; and though I had

promised myself to make some inquiries of the Prior concerning the owner of the eyes, yet not finding myself alone with him during the evening, I forbore, and in due time retired to my chamber, intending to proceed on my journey the following day. But when the morning came, I found myself very unwell, and the hospitable Prior recommended me not to leave my bed ; and finally, I was obliged to remain there not only that day, but many days ; in short, it was nearly a month before I was well enough to quit the convent.

“ In the meantime, however, I had learnt the story of Brother Lazarus, for so I found the object of my curiosity was called ; and had thereby acquired some idea of the kind of influence he had exercised over me. The window of the little room I occupied looked into the burying-place of the monastery ; and on the day I first left my bed, I perceived a

monk below digging a grave. He was stooping forward, with his spade in his hand, and with his back towards me; and as my room was a good way from the ground, and the brothers were all habited alike, I could not distinguish which of them it was.

“ ‘You have a death amongst you?’ said I to the Prior when he visited me.

“ ‘No,’ returned he; ‘we have even no serious sickness at present.’

“ ‘I see one of the brothers below, digging a grave,’ I replied.

“ ‘Oh!’ said he, looking out, ‘that is Brother Lazarus—he is digging his own grave.’

“ ‘What an extraordinary fancy!’ said I. ‘But perhaps it’s a penance?’

“ ‘Not a penance imposed by me,’ replied the Prior, ‘but by himself. Brother Lazarus is a very strange person. Perhaps you may have observed him at the refectory



—he sat nearly opposite you at the other table?’

“ ‘ Bless me ! is that he ? Oh, yes, I observed him indeed. Who could help observing him ? He has the most extraordinary countenance I ever beheld.’

“ ‘ Brother Lazarus is a somnambulist,’ returned the Prior ; ‘ a natural somnambulist ; and is altogether, as I said before, a very extraordinary character.’

“ ‘ What !’ said I, my curiosity being a good deal awakened, ‘ does he walk in his sleep ? I never saw a somnambulist before, and should like to hear some particulars about him, if you have no objection to tell them me.’

“ ‘ They are not desirable inmates, I assure you,’ answered the Prior. ‘ I could tell you some very odd adventures connected with this disease of Brother Lazarus.’

“ ‘ I should be very much obliged to you,

if you would,' said I, with no little eagerness.

“‘Somnambulists are sometimes subject to strange hallucinations,’ he replied; ‘their dream is to them as real as our actual daily life is to us, and they not unfrequently act out the scenes of the drama with a terrible determination. I will just give you one instance of the danger that may accrue from a delusion of this nature. At the last monastery I inhabited, before I became Prior of Pierre Châtel, we had a monk who was known to be a somnambulist. He was a man of a sombre character and gloomy temperament; but it was rather supposed that his melancholy proceeded from physical causes, than from any particular source of mental uneasiness. His nightly wanderings were very irregular: sometimes they were frequent, sometimes there were long intermissions. Occasionally he would leave his cell, and after being ab-

sent from it several hours, would return of his own accord, still fast asleep, and lay himself in his bed : at other times he would wander so far away, that we had to send in search of him ; and sometimes he would be met by the messengers on his way back, either awake or asleep, as it might happen.

“ ‘ This strange malady had caused us some anxiety, and we had not neglected to seek the best advice we could obtain with respect to its treatment ; and at length the remedies applied seemed to have taken effect ; the paroxysms became more rare, and the disease so far subsided, that it ceased to be a subject of observation amongst us. Several months had elapsed since I had heard anything of the nocturnal excursions of Brother Dominique, when one night that I had some business of importance in hand, instead of going to bed when the rest of the brotherhood retired to their cells, I seated myself at

my desk, for the purpose of reading and answering certain letters concerning the affair in question. I had been some time thus occupied, and had just finished my work, and had already locked my desk preparatory to going to bed, when I heard the closing of a distant door, and immediately afterwards a foot in the long gallery that separated my room from the cells of the brotherhood. What could be the matter? Somebody must be ill, and was coming to seek assistance; and I was confirmed in this persuasion when I perceived that the foot was approaching my door, the key of which I had not turned. In a moment more it opened, and Fra Dominique entered, asleep. His eyes were wide open, but there was evidently no speculation in them; they were fixed and glassy, like the eyes of a corpse. He had nothing on but the tunic which he was in the habit of wearing at night, and in his hand he held a

large knife. At this strange apparition I stood transfixed. From the cautious manner in which he had opened the door, and the stealthy pace with which he advanced into the room, I could not doubt that he was bent upon mischief; but aware of the dangerous effects that frequently result from the too sudden awakening of a sleep-walker, I thought it better to watch in silence the acting out of this fearful drama, than venture to disturb him. With all the precautions he would have used not to arouse me had he been awake, he moved towards the bed, and in so doing he had occasion to pass quite close to where I stood, and as the light of the lamps fell upon his face, I saw that his brows were knit, and his features contracted into an expression of resolute malignity. When he reached the bed, he bent over it, felt with his hand in the place where I should have been, and then, apparently satisfied, he lifted up his arm, and struck

successively three heavy blows—so heavy, that, having pierced the bed-clothes, the blade of the knife entered far into the mattress, or rather into the mat that served me for one. Suddenly, however, whilst his arm was raised for another blow, he started, and turning round, hastened towards the window, which he opened, and had it been large enough, I think would have thrown himself out. But finding the aperture too small, he changed his direction. Again he passed close to me, and I felt myself shrink back as he almost touched me with his tunic. The two lamps that stood on my table made no impression on his eyes; he opened and closed the door as before; and I heard him proceed rapidly along the gallery, and retire to his own cell. It would be vain to attempt to describe the amazement with which I had witnessed this terrible scene. I had been, as it were, the spectator of my own murder, and I was overcome by the horrors of this visionary

assassination. Grateful to Providence for the danger I had escaped, I yet could not brace my nerves to look at it with calmness, and I passed the remainder of the night in a state of painful agitation. On the following morning, as soon as breakfast was over, I summoned Fra Dominique to my room. As he entered, I saw his eye glance at the bed, which was now, however, covered by other linen, so that there were no traces visible of his nocturnal visit. His countenance was sad, but expressed no confusion, till I inquired what had been the subject of his dreams the preceding night. Then he started, and changed colour.

“Reverend father,” said he, “why do you ask me this?”

“Never mind,” said I; “I have my reasons.”

“I do not like to repeat my dream,” returned he; “it was too frightful; and I fear

that it must have been Satan himself that inspired it."

"Nevertheless let me hear it."

"Well, reverend father, if you will have it so, what I dreamt was this—but that you may the better comprehend my dream, I must give you a short sketch of the circumstances in which it originated."

"Do so," said I; "and that we may not be interrupted, I'll lock the door." So having turned the key, and bade him seat himself on a stool opposite me, I prepared to listen to the story of his life.

END OF VOL. II.

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